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Honoré de Balzac

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NUMBER 132

The Human Comedy

SCENES OF PROVINCIAL LIFE

VOLUME X

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MME. CHARDON, EVE, AND LUCIEN.

Marion and Kolb, on guard at the door, rushed upstairs, crying:

"Here he is!"

Lucien saw the old courtyard and the old workroom, his mother and sister were on the stairs, and they threw themselves into his arms, forgetting all their woes for an instant in that embrace.

Honoré de Balzac

NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME COMPLETELY TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

LOST ILLUSIONS BY G. BURNHAM IVES

THE TWO POETS
A PROVINCIAL GREAT MAN IN PARIS
THE TRIALS OF AN INVENTOR

ILLUSTRATED WITH ETCHINGS

VOL. III

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LOST ILLUSIONS

PART THIRD

THE TRIALS OF AN INVENTOR

PART THIRD

THE TRIALS OF THE INVENTOR

*

The next morning Lucien had his passport visaed, purchased a holly stick and on Place de la Rue d'Enfer took a van, which, for ten sous, carried him as far as Longjumeau. He passed the first night in the stable of a farm two leagues from Arpajon. When he had reached Orléans he was already very weary and footsore; but a boatman took him down the Loire to Tours for three francs, and on the way he spent only two francs for food. He consumed five days walking from Tours to Poitiers. When he had gone some distance beyond Poitiers he had but a hundred sous, but he summoned his last remaining strength to continue his journey. One night, being overtaken by darkness on a level tract, he had determined to bivouac there, when he spied a calèche crawling up a hill not far away. He succeeded in climbing up between two trunks, unseen by the postilion, the travellers or a footman who was sitting on the box, and slept all night, lying in such

a way as not to be disturbed by the jolting. In the morning, awakened by the sun shining in his eyes and by voices, he recognized Mansle, the little town where, eighteen months before, he had awaited the coming of Madame de Bargeton, his heart overflowing with love and hope and joy. Seeing that he was covered with dust and surrounded by a crowd of postilions and loungers, he realized that a charge of vagrancy might be made against him; he leaped to the ground and was about to speak, when two travellers, who had alighted from the calèche, cut him short: he recognized the new prefect of the Charente, Comte Sixte du Châtelet, and his wife, Louise de Nègrepelisse.

"If we had only known what companion chance had given us!" said the countess. "Take a seat with us, monsieur."

Lucien bowed coldly to the couple, with a glance that was at once humble and threatening, then plunged into a crossroad on the outskirts of the town, hoping to find a farmhouse where he could breakfast on bread and milk, take needed rest and reflect in silence upon his future. He still had three francs. The author of *Les Marguerites* hurried along the road in feverish haste for a long time; he descended the stream, gazing involuntarily at the scenery which became more and more picturesque. Toward midday he reached a place where the stream broadened out into a sort of lake, surrounded by willows. He stopped to contemplate the cool, waving foliage, whose rustic charm acted insensibly

on his heart. A house, adjoining a mill on an arm of the stream, showed above the tree-tops its thatched roof ornamented with houseleeks. The unpretentious structure had no other embellishment than a few shrubs of jasmin, honeysuckle and hops, but all around were the showy flowers of the phlox and other prolific plants. Upon the embankment braced by rough piling, along which the highway ran above the line of the greatest freshets, he saw nets spread out in the sun. Ducks were swimming about in the clear water of the pond above the mill, between the two streams that roared through the gates. Above all else could be heard the irritating rumble and plashing of the mill. The poet spied, sitting on a rustic bench, a stout, comely housewife, knitting, and watching a child that was tormenting some chickens.

"My good woman," said Lucien, approaching her, "I am very tired, I have an attack of fever, and I have only three francs; will you board me on bread and milk and let me sleep on the straw for a week? That will give me time to write to my relatives, who will send me some money or come here to see me."

"Willingly," she said, "if my husband agrees. "Ho! little man!"

The miller came out, looked at Lucien and took his pipe from his mouth to say:

"Three francs for a week? we might as well charge you nothing."

"Perhaps I shall end by turning miller," said the

poet to himself, as he gazed at the lovely landscape before turning into the bed the miller's wife made up for him, where he slept until his hosts were alarmed.

"Courtois, go and see if that young man is dead or alive; he's been abed fourteen hours and I don't dare go," said the miller's wife, about noon, the next day.

"It's my opinion," said the miller, as he finished preparing his nets and tackle for catching fish, "that that pretty youngster will turn out to be some rascally actor without a sou to his name."

"What makes you think that, little man?" asked his wife.

"Bless my soul, he's neither prince nor minister, nor deputy, nor bishop; why are his hands as white as a man's who does no work?"

"Then it's very strange that hunger doesn't wake him up," said the wife, who had just prepared a breakfast for the guest whom chance had sent her the night before. "An actor?" she continued. "Where would he go? It isn't time for the fair at Angoulême."

Neither the miller nor his wife suspected that there is a man, neither prince, actor nor bishop, who is, nevertheless, both prince and actor, a man clothed with gloriously priestly functions—the poet, who seems to do nothing, and who, none the less, reigns over humanity when he has learned to describe it.

"Who can he be then?" Courtois asked his wife.

"Can there be any danger in taking him in?" she said.

"Pshaw! thieves are more wideawake than that; we should have been robbed before now."

"I am neither prince nor thief nor bishop nor actor," said Lucien, in a sad tone, appearing suddenly at the door; he had evidently overheard, through the window, the colloquy between the husband and the wife. "I am a poor, worn-out, young man, who has come from Paris to this place on foot. My name is Lucien de Rubempré and I am the son of Monsieur Chardon, the predecessor of Postel the druggist at L'Houmeau. My sister married David Séchard, the printer of Place du Mûrier, Angoulême."

"Wait a bit!" said the miller. "Isn't that printer the son of the old villain who has the estate at Marsac that he keeps adding to?"

"Precisely," Lucien replied.

"He has a scamp for a father then!" said Courtois. "He's forcing his son to sell everything, they say, and he has more than two hundred thousand francs in land, without counting his money-box."

When the mind and body have been shattered in a long and painful struggle, the moment when the strength is overtaxed is followed either by death or by prostration similar to death, in which, however, natures capable of prolonged resistance recover their strength. Lucien, who had reached a crisis of that

nature, seemed very near to giving up the struggle when he learned, although vaguely, that some new disaster had befallen David Séchard, his brother-in-law.

"Oh! my sister!" he cried; "my God! what have I done? I am an infamous villain!"

He sank upon a wooden bench, as pale and powerless as a dying man; the miller's wife hastened to bring him a bowl of milk, which she forced him to drink; but he begged the miller to help him to his bed, apologizing to him for the annoyance of having a stranger die on his hands, for he believed that his last hour had arrived. When he saw the phantom of death approaching, the comely poet's mind was filled with religious thoughts: he wished to see the curé, to confess and receive the sacraments. Such desires expressed in a feeble voice by a youth endowed with such a charming face and figure moved Madame Courtois deeply.

"Say, little man," she said, "take your horse and go and find Monsieur Marron, the doctor at Marsac; he'll see what's the matter with the boy, who doesn't seem to me to be in good condition, and you can bring the curé with you too. Perhaps they'll know more than you about that printer's business on Place du Mûrier, for Postel is Monsieur Marron's son-in-law."

When Courtois had gone, his wife, imbued, like all country people, with the conviction that disease demands nourishment, plied Lucien with food; he let her do as she pleased, giving way to violent

paroxysms of remorse, which aroused him from his dejection by the revulsion of feeling produced by that sort of moral tonic.

Courtois's mill was a league from Marsac, the chief town of the canton, situated half-way between Mansle and Angoulême; so the honest miller soon returned with the doctor and the curé of Marsac. Those two personages had both heard of Lucien's liaison with Madame de Bargeton, and as the whole department of the Charente was talking of nothing else at that moment but that lady's marriage and her return to Angoulême with the new prefect, Comte Sixte du Châtelet, when they learned that Lucien was at the miller's house, the physician and the curé became intensely anxious to find out the reasons that had prevented Monsieur de Bargeton's widow from marrying the young poet with whom she had eloped, and to ascertain if he were returning to the province to assist his brother-in-law, David Séchard. Curiosity combined with the humane instinct, therefore, to bring them promptly to the dying poet's bedside. So it was that, some two hours after Courtois's departure, Lucien heard upon the stony roadway leading to the mill, the rattle and jangle of the country doctor's wretched cabriolet. Messieurs Marron—the physician was the curé's nephew—appeared immediately after. In them Lucien saw two persons as intimately allied with David Séchard's father as neighbors can be in a small vine-growing village. When the doctor had examined the dying man, felt his pulse and looked at his

tongue, he glanced at the miller's wife with an expression that set her mind at rest.

"Madame Courtois," he said, "if, as I doubt not, you have a bottle of good wine in your cellar and a good fat eel in your larder, serve them up to your patient, who is simply tired out. Do that and our great man will soon be on his feet again."

"Ah! monsieur," said Lucien, "my disease is of the mind, not the body, and these good people said something that nearly killed me when they told me that my sister, Madame Séchard, was in trouble. In God's name, monsieur, tell me—Madame Courtois says that Postel married your daughter—do you not know something of David Séchard's affairs?"

"He is probably in prison," the physician replied; "his father has refused to help him."

"In prison!" echoed Lucien, "and for what?"

"Why, for certain notes sent down from Paris, which he had probably forgotten, for he is commonly supposed not to have any too clear a notion of what he's doing," replied Monsieur Marron.

"Leave me with Monsieur le Curé, I beg you," said the poet, whose face underwent an alarming change.

The doctor and the miller and his wife left the room. When Lucien was alone with the old priest, he cried:

"I deserve the death which I feel close upon me, monsieur, and I am a miserable villain who can do nothing but throw himself into the arms of religion. I, monsieur, am the assassin of my sister and my

brother, for David Séchard is a brother to me! I forged the notes David has been unable to pay—I have ruined him. In my horrible misery, I had forgotten that crime. The prosecution instituted against me on those notes was stopped by the intervention of a very rich man, and I supposed he had paid them; he can have done nothing of the kind!"

And Lucien told the story of his misfortunes. When he had finished the poem with a feverish peroration, truly worthy of a poet, he begged the curé to go to Angoulême and ascertain from his sister Ève and his mother, Madame Chardon, the real condition of affairs, so that he might know if he could still do anything to remedy them.

"I shall have strength to live until you return, monsieur," he said, weeping hot tears. "If my mother and sister and David do not cast me off, I shall not die."

The eloquence of the young Parisian, the tears that accompanied his heart-rending repentance, the aspect of the pallid youth who seemed to be dying of despair, the narrative of misfortunes that no human strength could endure, all combined to arouse the curé's interest and compassion.

"In the provinces as in Paris, monsieur," he said, "it isn't safe to believe the half of what one hears; don't be alarmed at a rumor which may well be sadly distorted when it has travelled three leagues from Angoulême. Old Séchard, our neighbor, left Marsac a few days ago; so he is probably engaged

in arranging his son's affairs. I will go to Angoulême and will come back and tell you if you can return to your family, with whom your frank confession and your penitence will help me to plead your cause."

The curé did not know that Lucien had repented so many times in the last eighteen months that his repentance, however tempestuous it might be, had no other value than that of a scene upon the stage, perfectly played and replayed with sincerity! The physician took the curé's place. Recognizing in the patient the symptoms of a nervous crisis which had just safely passed the danger-point, the nephew was as consoling as his uncle had been, and succeeded at last in inducing his patient to take some nourishment.

The curé, who was thoroughly familiar with the province and its ways, walked to Mansle, knowing that the coach from Ruffec to Angoulême would soon pass; and was carried to his destination. The old priest intended to seek information concerning David Séchard from his grandnephew Postel, the druggist at L'Houmeau, the printer's former rival in the pursuit of the fair Ève. From the precautions the little druggist took in assisting the old man to alight from the shocking vehicle that carried passengers from Ruffec to Angoulême in those days, the most obtuse spectator would have guessed that Monsieur and Madame Postel based their hopes for the future on his inheritance.

"Have you breakfasted? will you have anything

to eat? We didn't expect you, this is an agreeable surprise——"

A thousand questions were asked at once. Madame Postel was certainly predestined to be the wife of a druggist of L'Houmeau. She was of the same height as little Postel and had the ruddy face of a girl reared in the country; her general appearance was vulgar, and all her beauty lay in a remarkable freshness of complexion. Her reddish hair growing very low on the forehead, her manners and her language, which were entirely consistent with the simplicity written in all the features of her round face, her almost yellow eyes, everything about her, said that her marriage was due to her future prospects. Thus, after a year of marriage she was already in the saddle, and seemed to have made herself Postel's absolute mistress, he being only too happy to have fallen in with an heiress. Madame Léonie Postel, born Marron, was nursing a child, the pet of the old curé, the doctor and Postel —a horrible child who resembled both father and mother.

"Well, uncle, what brings you to Angoulême, pray, when you won't take a mouthful and talk about going away the minute you come?" queried Léonie.

As soon as the worthy ecclesiastic pronounced the names of Ève and David Séchard, Postel blushed and Léonie bestowed upon the little man the glance of factitious jealousy for the past, which a woman who controls her husband absolutely never fails to resort to in the interest of her future.

"What then have those people done to you, uncle, that you should meddle in their business?" said Léonie with evident ill-humor.

"They are unfortunate, my child," replied the curé, and he told Postel that Lucien was at Courtois's mill and described his condition.

"Ah! so this is the way he comes back from Paris!" cried Postel. "Poor boy! he was a bright fellow, though, and he was ambitious! he went to look for grain and comes back without straw. But what does he come here for? His sister is in the most horrible destitution, for all these great geniuses, David as well as Lucien, know mighty little about business. We spoke about him at the court, and, as magistrate, I had to sign the judgment against him. It hurt me to do it! I don't know whether Lucien can go to his sister's under the circumstances; but, at all events, the little room he used to have is unoccupied, and I will gladly let him have it."

"That's right, Postel," said the priest, taking up his three-cornered hat and preparing to leave the shop, after he had kissed the child, asleep in Léonie's arms.

"Of course you'll dine with us, uncle," said Madame Postel, "for you won't get through in a hurry if you try to untangle the affairs of those people. My husband will drive you home in his gig with his pony."

The husband and wife watched their precious grand-uncle walking toward Angoulême.

"He walks pretty briskly, all the same, for his age," observed the druggist.

While the venerable ecclesiastic was climbing the steps to Angoulême, it will be well for us to say a word as to the network of opposing interests in which he was about to put his foot.

After Lucien's departure for Paris, David Séchard, that beast of burden, strong-hearted and intelligent as him we see represented in painting as the Evangelist's companion, set out to achieve by rapid strides the great fortune he had dreamed of, more on Ève's account and Lucien's than his own, as he sat beside Ève on the river bank the evening she gave him her heart and her hand. To raise his wife to the sphere of wealth and fashion that she was fitted to adorn, to sustain with his strong arm his brother's ambition, such was the programme written in letters of fire before his eyes. Newspapers, politics, the immense development of the book trade, of literature generally, and of the sciences, the tendency to public discussion of all the interests of the country, the whole social movement that made itself manifest when the Restoration seemed firmly established, would soon demand an output of paper almost ten times as great as that upon which the celebrated Ouvrard, acting from similar motives, based his calculations at the beginning of the Revolution. But in 1821, paper manufactories were too numerous in France for anyone to hope that he

could become sole owner of them all, like Ouvrard, who secured all the principal factories after monopolizing their products. Indeed David had neither the requisite courage nor the capital for such a speculation. Just at that time machinery for making paper of any length was being set up in England. It was urgently necessary, therefore, to adapt paper-making to the requirements of French civilization, which threatened to extend the habit of discussion to all manner of subjects, and to rest upon a perpetual manifestation of individual opinion—a genuine misfortune, for people that deliberate accomplish very little in the way of action.

So it happened, strangely enough, that while Lucien was taking his place among the wheels and pinions of the vast machine of journalism, at the risk of leaving there his honor and his intelligence, torn to shreds, David Séchard in his printing-office was watching the progress of the periodical press in its material consequences. It was his object to bring the means into harmony with the result toward which the spirit of the age was tending. The event has proved his wisdom in seeking a fortune in the manufacture of paper at a low price. During the last fifteen years, the office to which applications for patents are referred has received more than a hundred applications founded upon alleged discoveries of substances to be introduced in the manufacture of paper.

More confident than ever of the utility of this apparently unimportant but immensely profitable

discovery, David, after his brother-in-law started for Paris, fell into the preoccupied state of mind that that problem was certain to induce in anybody who should seek to solve it. As he had exhausted all his resources in preparing for his marriage and providing money for the expenses of Lucien's journey to Paris, he found himself miserably poor at the very outset of his married life. He had kept a thousand francs to meet the necessary expenses of the printing-office, and Postel the druggist had his name on a note for a like sum. Thus, to this profound thinker's mind, the problem was twofold: he must invent a cheap method of making paper, and invent it at once; he must adjust the profits of his discovery to the necessities of his family and his business. Now, what epithet can we apply to a brain capable of shaking off the painful preoccupation caused by poverty that must be hidden, by the spectacle of a family without bread, and by the daily demands of a trade so burdened with petty details as the printer's, and all the while scouring the domains of the unknown with the enthusiastic zeal of the scholar in pursuit of a secret which day after day eludes the most subtle investigations? Alas! as we shall see, inventors have many other ills to endure, to say nothing of the ingratitude of the masses, to whom sluggards and incapables say of a man of genius: "He was born to be an inventor, he couldn't be anything else. There's no more reason to be grateful to him for his discovery than to a man for being born a prince! he simply exercises his

natural faculties! and then, too, he has found his reward in the work itself."

Marriage causes a profound mental and physical upheaval in a young woman; but in the case of a marriage between citizens of the middle class, the wife is more frequently called upon to study matters that are entirely new to her and to become familiar with business; thence it follows that there is a period when she must necessarily play the part of a looker-on without acting. David's love for his wife unfortunately delayed her education in this respect; he dared not tell her the condition of things, either on the day after the wedding or on the following days. Notwithstanding the deep distress to which his father's avarice condemned him, he could not decide to poison his honeymoon by the depressing task of initiating his wife in the details of his laborious profession and by imparting the information that a tradesman's wife must possess. So that the thousand francs, the sole credit item, were consumed by the household rather than by the workshop.

David's heedlessness and his wife's ignorance lasted four months! The awakening was terrible. When the note held by Postel came due, the little household was without money, and the nature of the debt was so well known to Ève that she sacrificed her wedding-jewels and her silver-plate to pay it. On the evening of the day when the note was paid, Ève attempted to make David talk about his affairs, for she had noticed that he was neglecting his printing-office for the problem he had mentioned

to her not long before. Beginning with the second month after his marriage, David passed most of his time under the lean-to at the end of the courtyard, in a little room in which he cast his rolls. Three months after his return to Angoulême, he had substituted for the balls with which the letters were inked, the ink-table and cylinder with which the ink is made and distributed by rolls made of strong glue and molasses. This first step toward the perfection of his apparatus was so incontestably desirable that the brothers Cointet adopted it as soon as they had seen its effect. David had set up against the partition wall of this species of kitchen, a furnace with a copper pan, on the pretext of spending less for charcoal to recast his rolls, which he never recast but once; the rusty moulds were arranged in rows along the wall. Not only did he supply that room with a solid oak door, lined on the inside with sheet-iron, but he also replaced the dirty panes in the only window by which the room was lighted, with panes of fluted glass, so that no one could discover from without the nature of his occupation. At the first word Ève said to him on the subject of their future, he glanced at her with a disturbed air and checked her with these words:

"I know, my child, what your feelings must be at the sight of a deserted workshop and what you might call my absolute nullity so far as business is concerned. But, look," he continued, leading her to their bedroom window and pointing to his mysterious den, "our fortune is there. We shall have

to suffer a few more months; but let us suffer patiently, and leave me to solve the mechanical problem you know of, which will put an end to all our misery."

David was so kind and good, it was so impossible to doubt his devoted affection, that the poor girl, preoccupied as all wives are by the question of the daily expenses of the household, made it her task to spare her husband all the tiresome details of housekeeping; she left her lovely blue and white bedroom where she was perfectly happy at work with her needle and chatting with her mother, and went down into one of the wooden cages at the end of the workroom to study the commercial mechanism of the printer's trade. Was it not a heroic step for a woman already *enceinte?* During those first months, David's inactive establishment had been deserted by the workmen whom he had hitherto found it necessary to employ; they had gone away one by one. The brothers Cointet, being overburdened with work, employed not only workmen from all over the department, allured by the prospect of making good wages with them, but some from Bordeaux too, especially apprentices who thought themselves skilful enough to evade the conditions of apprenticeship.

Upon an examination of the resources of the Séchard establishment, Ève found only three persons there. First, Cérizet, the apprentice whom David had amused himself by instructing at Didot's, after the manner of proof-readers, who are very likely to be particularly attracted to one or two of the great

number of workmen under them ; David had brought the apprentice in question, Cérizet, to Angoulême with him. Secondly, Marion, as devotedly attached to the place as a watch-dog. Lastly, Kolb, an Alsatian, formerly man-of-all-work at Messieurs Didot's. Kolb, having been drawn for military service, happened to be stationed at Angoulême, where David recognized him at a review just as his time of service expired. Kolb called on David and lost his heart to big Marion, discovering in her all the qualities a man of his class desires in a wife : the vigorous health that bronzes the cheek, the masculine strength that enabled Marion to lift a *form of type* with ease, the religious probity by which Alsatians set such store, the devotion to her masters which reveals a noble character and, lastly, the economical instinct to which she owed a little hoard of a thousand francs, and the true provincial neatness of her linen, dresses and other personal effects. Marion, tall and stout and about thirty-six years old, was immensely flattered to be the object of the attentions of a cuirassier five feet seven inches tall, well built and strong as a rampart, and she naturally suggested to him the idea of becoming a printer. By the time that the Alsatian received his definitive discharge, David and Marion had made quite an expert *bear* of him, although he could neither read nor write. The composition of what was called *town* work was not so abundant during that quarter that Cérizet could not attend to it alone. Being at one and the same time, compositor, maker-up and proof-

reader, Cérizet became what Kant calls a *phenomenal triplicity:* he composed, corrected his own work, entered the orders and made out the bills; but, as he had nothing to do most of the time, he read novels in his cage at the end of the workroom, awaiting an order for a poster, or a wedding invitation. Marion, who had been trained by the elder Séchard, cut the paper, moistened it, helped Kolb to print it, stretched and trimmed it, and with it all did the cooking, going to market early in the morning.

When Ève called upon Cérizet for an account of the first six months, she found that the receipts were eight hundred francs. The expenses, mainly the wages of Cérizet and Kolb, the former receiving two francs per day and the latter one, amounted to six hundred francs. Now, as the cost of the materials required for the work done and delivered amounted to a hundred and fifty francs, it was clear to Ève that, during the first six months of his married life, David had lost his rent, interest on the capital represented by the value of his plant and his license, Marion's wages, ink, and lastly, the profits a printer should make, a multitude of things expressed in printers' language by the word *stuff*—an expression derived from the cloths and pieces of silk used to make the pressure of the screw less wearing upon the type by inserting a square piece of cloth—the *blanket*—between the plate of the press and the paper that receives the impression.

After she had reached a general understanding of the methods of the printing-office and its results,

Ève realized the helpless condition of the establishment, blasted by the devouring activity of the brothers Cointet, who were at once paper manufacturers, journalists, licensed printers of the bishopric, and did all the work for the town and the prefecture. The journal which the Séchards had sold them two years before for twenty-two thousand francs was at this time bringing them in eighteen thousand francs a year. Ève detected the shrewd scheming that lay behind the apparent generosity of the brothers Cointet, who left the Séchard office enough work to live on and not enough to make them rivals. When she learned how the business was conducted, she began by preparing an accurate inventory of all the property. She employed Kolb, Marion and Cérizet to clean the workshop and put it in order. Then, one evening when David returned from an excursion in the fields, followed by an old woman carrying an enormous bundle wrapped in a sheet, Ève asked his advice as to the best way of turning to account the odds and ends left behind by Père Séchard, promising that she would carry out by herself whatever he advised. Acting upon his advice, she used all the bits of paper she had found, and sorted for printing, in two columns on a single leaf, the popular legends with colored pictures that peasants fasten upon the walls of their hovels : the story of the *Wandering Jew*, *Robert the Devil*, *The Fair Maguelonne* and some of the miracles. She transformed Kolb into a street-hawker. Cérizet did not lose an instant ; from morning till night he set up

those harmless pages and their coarse illustrations. Marion was all-sufficient for the presswork. Madame Chardon attended to all the household duties, for Ève colored the pictures. In two months, thanks to Kolb's activity and honesty, Madame Séchard sold, in Angoulême and its neighborhood, within a circuit of twelve leagues, three thousand of these leaflets which cost her thirty francs to print, and which, at two sous each, produced three hundred francs. But when all the cottages and all the wine shops were hung with these legends, it became necessary to devise some other speculation, for the Alsatian could not go outside of the department.

Ève, who turned over every object in the place, found the collection of figures necessary for printing the so-called *Shepherds' Almanac*, in which things are represented by signs, images, or pictures painted red, blue and black. Old Séchard, who could neither read nor write, had at one time made a considerable sum of money by printing this book, intended for persons who could not read. The almanac is sold for a sou and consists of a sheet folded sixty-four times, making a 64mo of a hundred and twenty-eight pages. Overjoyed at the success of her flying sheets, a branch of industry to which small provincial printing-offices devote especial attention, Madame Séchard determined to undertake the *Shepherds' Almanac* on a grand scale, devoting to it her profits on the leaflets. The paper of the *Shepherds' Almanac*, of which several million copies are sold annually in France, is coarser than that of the

Almanach Liégeois and costs about four francs a ream. As a ream contains five hundred sheets when printed, it would bring, at one sou a sheet, twenty-five francs. Madame Séchard determined to print a hundred reams at the first impression, which would make fifty thousand almanacs to be sold at a profit of two thousand francs. Although he was absent-minded, as any man so deeply occupied must be, David was amazed to hear a press creaking, and, as he cast an eye into the workshop, to see Cérizet standing by Madame Séchard and composing under her direction. Her husband's approbation was a glorious triumph for Ève when he went in and looked over what she had undertaken and declared the almanac to be an excellent idea. He promised his advice, too, as to the use of inks of various colors made necessary by the scheme of the almanac, wherein everything speaks to the eye. Lastly, he determined to recast the rolls himself in his mysterious workshop, to aid his wife as much as he could in this great petty undertaking.

At the outset of this season of frantic activity came the distressing letters wherein Lucien informed his mother and sister and brother-in-law of his ill-success in Paris and his destitute condition. It will be seen therefore that when they sent that spoiled child three hundred francs, Ève, Madame Chardon and David, one and all, had bestowed upon the poet a portion of the purest blood in their veins. Overwhelmed by the news and in despair at earning so little by working so courageously, Ève

could not look forward without dismay to the event that usually fills a young husband and wife's cup of joy to the brim. When she found that she was about to become a mother, she said to herself:

"If my dear David has not reached the goal of his investigations when I am confined, what will become of us? And who will carry on the reviving business of our little printing-office?"

The *Shepherds' Almanac* should have been finished long before January first; but Cérizet, upon whom all the labor of composition devolved, went about the work with exasperating moderation, made still worse by the fact that Madame Séchard did not know enough about the trade to reprimand him, but had to content herself with watching the young Parisian.

This Cérizet, an inmate of the great Foundling Hospital in Paris, had been articled to the Messieurs Didot as an apprentice. From fourteen to seventeen, he was a fanatical admirer of Séchard, who placed him under the instruction of one of the most skilful workmen, and made him his urchin, his typographical page; for David naturally took an interest in him, finding him possessed of keen intelligence, and won his affection by procuring for him some pleasures and comforts from which his poverty debarred him. Endowed with a face not unlike that of a weasel, reddish hair and eyes of a muddy blue, Cérizet had brought with him the manners and morals of the Paris *gamin* to the capital of Angoumois. His keen, mocking wit, his malignity, made

him a redoubtable personage there. Being less carefully watched by David at Angoulême, either because his added years inspired more confidence in his mentor or because the printer relied upon the quieting influences of the province, Cérizet had become, but without David's knowledge, the Don Juan in a paper cap, of three or four young working girls, and was utterly depraved. His moral code, the offspring of the Parisian wine shop, recognized no law save personal interest. As Cérizet's turn to serve in the army would come the following year, he seemed to have no career in trade marked out for him; so he ran into debt, thinking that in six months he would be a soldier and none of his creditors could prosecute him then. David retained some authority over the boy, not because he was his master, not because he had taken an interest in him, but because the ex-street Arab of Paris recognized David's lofty intelligence. He soon began to fraternize with the Cointets' workmen, attracted to them by the power of the jacket, the blouse, and by the *esprit de corps*, which has perhaps even more influence among the lower than among the higher classes. In their company Cérizet lost the few excellent precepts David had taught him; nevertheless, when they joked about the *sabots* at his workshop, a term of contempt bestowed by the bears on Séchard's wooden presses, and pointed to the magnificent iron presses, twelve in number, at work in the immense workshop of the Cointet establishment, where the one remaining wooden press was

used to strike off proofs, he took David's part and proudly threw such remarks as these in the face of the *blagueurs:*

"With his *sabots,* my innocent will go farther than yours with their iron playthings that turn out nothing but prayer books! He's on the track of a secret that will make all the printing-offices in France and Navarre open their eyes!"

"Meanwhile, you vile proof-reader at forty sous, your boss is a laundry girl!" someone would retort.

"But she's pretty, and she's pleasanter to look at than the *muzzles* of your bosses."

"Is it the sight of his wife that feeds you?"

From the wine shop, or the door of the printing-office, where these friendly disputes took place, some echoes of the condition of affairs in the Séchard establishment reached the ears of the Cointet brothers; they learned of the speculation undertaken by Ève, and deemed it necessary to nip in the bud an enterprise that might give the poor woman a start on the road to prosperity.

"Let us give it to her across the knuckles so as to make her sick of the business," said the brothers between themselves.

That one of the brothers who managed the printing-office met Cérizet and proposed to him to read proofs for them, at so much per proof sheet, to relieve their reader, who was not equal to doing all their work. By working a few hours at night, Cérizet earned more with the Cointets than with

David Séchard in the whole day. There followed some negotiations between the Cointets and Cérizet, whose great abilities they recognized, and they condoled with him for being employed in a position so injurious to his real interests.

"You might be proof-reader in a larger establishment," said one of them to him one day, "where you could earn six francs a day, and with your intelligence, you would secure an interest in the business sooner or later."

"What good can it do me to be a good proof-reader?" said Cérizet; "I'm an orphan, I am in the conscription for next year, and if I am drawn, who will pay for a substitute for me?"

"If you make yourself useful," replied the wealthy printer, "why shouldn't someone advance the necessary amount for that purpose?"

"It won't be my innocent that will do it!" said Cérizet.

"Pshaw! perhaps he'll have found the secret he's after——"

"These words were uttered in a tone calculated to arouse the most evil thoughts in the mind of him who heard them; Cérizet darted at the paper manufacturer a glance as eloquent as the shrewdest question.

"I don't know what he's about," he said cautiously, finding that the *boss* remained mute, "but he's not the man to hunt for the capital in the lower case!"

"Here, my friend," said the printer, taking six

proof sheets of the Prayer Book of the diocese, and handing them to Cérizet, "if you can correct those for us by to-morrow, you shall have eighteen francs. We bear no malice, we help our rival's proof-reader to earn a little money! Indeed, we might allow Madame Séchard to go on with the affair of the *Shepherds' Almanac*, and ruin her; but we will authorize you to say to her that we have undertaken a *Shepherds' Almanac* ourselves, and to make her understand that she won't be first in the market."

We can understand now why Cérizet worked so slowly on the composition of the almanac.

When she found that the Cointets were interfering with her poor little speculation, Eve was terror-stricken; she tried to look upon Cérizet's hypocritical warning of the competition that awaited her as a proof of attachment; but she soon detected in her only compositor some indications of a too ardent curiosity, which she chose to attribute to his age.

"Cérizet," said she one morning, "you stand on the doorstep and wait for Monsieur Séchard to pass in order to find out what he is concealing, you look out into the courtyard when he comes from the shop where he casts the rolls, instead of finishing the composition of the almanac. All that is not right, especially when you see me, his wife, respecting his secrets and working so hard in order to leave him free to attend to his own work. If you had not wasted your time, the almanac would be finished, Kolb would already be selling it and the Cointets couldn't injure us."

"Oho! madame," replied Cérizet, "don't you think it's enough to do a hundred sous' worth of composition for the forty sous a day that I earn here? Why, if I hadn't proofs to read for the Cointet brothers during the evening, I should have to live on bran."

"You are beginning early to be ungrateful, you'll make your way," said Ève, wounded to the quick, less by Cérizet's reproaches than by the insolent coarseness of his manner, his threatening attitude and his aggressive expression.

"Not if I always have a woman for boss," he retorted, "for then the month doesn't often have thirty days."

Ève glanced at Cérizet with a withering expression of wounded womanly dignity, and went up to her own room. When David came in to dinner, she said to him:

"My dear, are you sure of that little scamp of a Cérizet?"

"Cérizet!" he replied, "Why, he's my own devil, I trained him, I had him to hold copy for me. It was I who put him at the case, in short, whatever he is he owes to me! As well ask a father if he's sure of his child."

Ève told her husband that Cérizet was reading proofs for the Cointets.

"Poor boy! he must live," David replied, with the humility of a master who feels that he is at fault.

"True; but see the difference between Kolb and

Cérizet: Kolb walks twenty leagues a day, spends fifteen or twenty sous, brings back seven, eight, sometimes nine francs for leaflets sold, and never asks me for anything but the twenty sous he has spent. Kolb would cut off his right hand rather than draw the bar of a press for the Cointets, and he wouldn't look at the things you throw out into the yard, if they offered him a thousand crowns; whereas, Cérizet picks them up and examines them."

It is difficult for noble minds to believe in evil, in ingratitude, they require harsh lessons before they realize the extent of human corruption; and when their education in that respect is completed, they rise to a height of indulgence which is the last degree of contempt.

"Pshaw! simply a Parisian *gamin's* curiosity," cried David.

"Very well, my dear, do me the favor to come down to the workshop and see what your *gamin* has set up in a month, and tell me if he shouldn't have finished our almanac in that month."

After dinner David did as she requested, and satisfied himself that the almanac should have been set up in a week; then, when he learned that the Cointets were preparing a similar one, he came to his wife's assistance and took charge of the workshop himself. He took Kolb off from selling the leaflets and set up with his own hands a form that Kolb and Marion could work, while he himself worked the other with Cérizet, superintending the impressions

in inks of different colors. Each color requires a separate impression, so that four different inks require the press to be worked four times. For that reason, the *Shepherds' Almanac* costs so much to set up that it is printed exclusively in provincial offices, where wages and interest on the capital invested in the printing business amount to very little. This coarse work, therefore, is not attempted in the establishments that produce the finer classes of work. For the first time since old Séchard's retirement, two presses were rumbling in the old workshop. Although the almanac was a masterpiece in its way, Ève was obliged to sell it for two liards, for the Cointets sold theirs to the hawkers for three centimes; she saved the extra expense of the hawkers' commission, for the sales were made by Kolb directly, but the speculation was a failure.

When he found that his fair mistress was suspicious, Cérizet mentally assumed a hostile attitude, and said to himself: "You suspect me, I will have my revenge!" The Parisian *gamin* is constituted in that way. So Cérizet accepted from Messieurs Cointet, compensation that was clearly excessive for reading the proofs which he went to their office to get every evening and returned the following morning. Talking more and more freely with them every day, he became familiar with them and saw at last the real meaning of the suggestion that he might escape service in the army, which they held out to him as a bait; so that, far from having to corrupt him, the Cointets heard from him the first sugges-

tion as to prying into David's secret and working it for what it was worth.

Sorely disturbed in mind when she saw how little dependence she could place upon Cérizet, and by the impossibility of finding another Kolb, Eve determined to discharge her only compositor, whom the second sight of a loving wife pointed out as a traitor ; but, as that would be the death of the printing-office, she resolved upon a bold step : she wrote to Monsieur Métivier, the correspondent of David Séchard, the Cointets, and almost all the paper manufacturers in the department, requesting him to have the following announcement inserted in the *Journal de la Librairie* in Paris :

For sale, a printing-office in perfect running order, stock-in-trade and license, located in Angoulême. Address, for terms of sale, Monsieur Métivier, Rue Serpente.

When the Cointets read the copy of the paper in which that announcement appeared, they said to each other :

" That little woman has a head on her shoulders ; it's time that we took control of her establishment, giving her enough to live on ; otherwise, we might find a dangerous rival in David's successor, and it's to our interest always to have an eye in that office."

Acting upon that idea, the brothers went to call upon David Séchard. Eve, with whom they first spoke, experienced the keenest delight when she saw how quickly her stratagem had taken effect, for they did not conceal their purpose to propose to

Monsieur Séchard that he should print for them: they were overcrowded with work, their presses could not do it all, they had sent to Bordeaux for workmen, and were very anxious to have the use of David's three presses.

"Messieurs," she said, while Cérizet had gone to tell David of his confrères' visit, "my husband knew many excellent, honest and diligent workmen at Messieurs Didot's, and he will undoubtedly select a successor from among the best—Would it not be better to sell the establishment for twenty thousand francs, which would give us a thousand francs a year, than to lose that amount every year in carrying on business under the conditions you have forced upon us? Why need you have envied us our poor little speculation in the almanac, which, by the way, belonged to this office?"

"Ah! madame, why not have told us your plans? we would not have crossed your path," was the affable retort of that one of the two brothers who was called Cointet the Great.

"Nonsense, messieurs! you did not begin your almanac until you had learned from Cérizet that I was making one."

As she spoke with great earnestness, she looked at Cointet the Great and made him lower his eyes. Thus she acquired proof of Cérizet's treachery.

This Cointet, the manager of the paper mills and of the financial part of the business, was a much abler business man than his brother Jean, who managed the printing-office with great good judgment, but whose

capacity might be compared to that of a colonel ; whereas Boniface was a general to whom Jean left the chief command. Boniface was a thin, dried-up man, with a face as yellow as a taper and covered with red blotches, tightly-compressed lips, and eyes like a cat's ; he never lost his temper, but listened as calmly as a saint to the grossest insults and replied in a soft voice. He went to mass and confession and partook of the sacrament. Beneath his wheedling manners, beneath an almost effeminate exterior, he concealed the tenacity of purpose, the ambition of the priest, and the avidity of the tradesman consumed by the thirst for wealth and honors. From 1820, Cointet the Great longed for all that the bourgeoisie at last obtained by the Revolution of 1830. Filled with hatred of the aristocracy, at heart indifferent in religious matters, he was a devotee to the same extent that Bonaparte was a *believer in the Convention*. His spinal column bent with wondrous flexibility before the nobility and the government officials, with whom he was cringing, humble and oily. Lastly, and this trait will be appreciated to the full by men accustomed to business transactions, he wore blue glasses, which enabled him to conceal the expression of his eyes, on the pretext of sheltering them from the glaring reflection of the light in a town where the ground and the buildings are white, and the intensity of the sun's rays is increased by the location on the summit of a hill. Although he was only slightly above middle height, he seemed tall because of his thinness, which denoted

a constitution undermined by hard work, a brain in a constant state of fermentation. His Jesuitical countenance was supplemented by long, straight, gray hair cut after the style affected by ecclesiastics, and by his costume which, for the past seven years, had consisted of black trousers, black stockings, black waistcoat and nutbrown *lévite*—the Southern name for a frockcoat. He was called Cointet the Great to distinguish him from his brother, who was known as Cointet the Fat, a method of giving expression to the contrast between them in figure as well as in business capacity, although both were redoubtable men in their way.

In truth, Jean Cointet, a short, stout worthy, with a Flemish face tanned by the sun of Angoumois, pot-bellied like Sancho Panza, with broad shoulders, and a smile always on his lips, presented a striking contrast to his older brother. Not only did Jean differ from his brother physically and intellectually, but he professed something very like liberal opinions; he belonged to the Left Centre, went to mass on Sundays only and was on the best of terms with the liberal tradesmen. Some merchants of L'Houmeau maintained that this divergence of opinions was a shrewd game on the part of the brothers. Cointet the Great skilfully made the most of his brother's apparent amiability, he used Jean as a club. Jean had to say all the harsh words and be responsible for all the harsh deeds that were repugnant to his brother's kindly disposition. Jean had the department of wrath, he lost his temper, made propositions

that could not be entertained and thereby made his brother seem more generous; and thus, sooner or later, they gained their object.

Ève, with the tact peculiar to women, soon fathomed the characters of the two brothers, and she stood on her guard in presence of such dangerous adversaries. David, having been informed by his wife of the business in hand, listened absent-mindedly to the propositions of his enemies.

"Make your arrangements with my wife," he said as he left the office to return to his little laboratory; "she knows more about my establishment than I do myself. I am busily engaged with something that will be more lucrative than this wretched printing-office, and will enable me to make up for the losses I have suffered in my dealings with you."

"How so?" queried Cointet the Fat, with a laugh.

Ève glanced at her husband to advise him to be careful.

"You and every other consumer of paper will pay me tribute," David replied.

"What are you trying to do, pray?" asked Benoît-Boniface Cointet.

When he put this question in a soft, insinuating tone, Ève looked once more at her husband to urge him to make no reply or to make a reply that would mean nothing.

"I am trying to make paper for fifty per cent of the present net price."

And he left the room without noticing the look the brothers exchanged, which said as plainly as possible: "This fellow may be an inventor; a man can't have his figure and do nothing!"—"Let's work him!" said Boniface's eyes.—"But how?" said Jean's.

"David acts with you as he does with me," said Madame Séchard. "When I am curious, he is suspicious of my name, I suppose, and he throws that sentence at me, which after all, is only a dream."

"If your husband can make that dream come true, he will certainly make his fortune more rapidly than by following the printer's trade, and I am no longer surprised that he neglects this establishment," rejoined Boniface, turning toward the deserted workshop, where Kolb sat on a board, spreading garlic on his bread; "but we should be very sorry to see this office in the hands of an active, energetic, ambitious competitor, and perhaps we can come to an understanding. Suppose, for instance, you should agree to let your plant for a certain sum to one of our workmen, who would work for us under your name, as is done in Paris; we would keep him busy enough to enable him to pay you a very fair rent and to make some little profit."

"That depends on the amount," replied Ève. "What would you give?" she added, looking at Boniface in a way to show him that she perfectly understood his plan.

"What would be your idea?" asked Jean Cointet hastily.

"Three thousand francs for six months," she said.

"Why, my dear little woman, you spoke of selling your whole establishment for twenty thousand francs," retorted Boniface gently. "The interest on twenty thousand francs for a year, at six per cent, is only twelve hundred."

Ève was abashed for a moment and realized the value of discretion in business dealings.

"You will have the use of our presses and our type, with which I have shown you that I can still do business in a small way," she rejoined, "and we have to pay rent to Monsieur Séchard, senior, who doesn't overburden us with gifts."

After a two hours' struggle, Ève obtained two thousand francs for six months, one thousand to be paid in advance. When everything was settled, the brothers informed her that they proposed to let the plant to Cérizet. Ève could not repress a gesture of surprise.

"Isn't it better to select some one who is familiar with the premises?" said Cointet the Fat.

Ève bowed to the brothers without replying, and promised that she would keep an eye on Cérizet herself.

"Well, well, so our enemies are in the citadel!" laughed David at dinner time, when his wife handed him the documents to sign.

"It's all right," she said, "I will answer for the fidelity of Kolb and Marion, and between them, they'll look after everything. At all events, we are

receiving four thousand francs a year from a plant that was costing us something all the time, and I am sure that your hopes won't be fulfilled for another year!"

"You were born to be the wife of an inventor, as you said that night by the river!' said Séchard pressing his wife's hand affectionately.

Although David was sure of a sufficient sum to carry his household through the winter, the whole establishment was under the surveillance of Cérizet, and, without knowing it, dependent on Cointet the Great.

"They are ours!" said the manager of the paper mill to his brother the printer, as they left the house. "The poor creatures will accustom themselves to the idea of receiving rent for their place; they will count upon it and run in debt. Six months hence we won't renew the lease, and then we'll see what this man of genius has in his bag, for we will propose to him to get him out of the scrape by going into partnership with him to work his invention."

If some shrewd business man had seen Cointet the Great as he uttered the words, *by going into partnership with him*, he would have understood that the perils of marriage at the mayor's office are much less than at the Tribunal de Commerce. Was not the fact that those savage hunters were already on the track of their game conclusive of the result? Were David and his wife, assisted by Kolb and Marion, in a condition to resist the wiles of a Boniface Cointet?

When the time of Madame Séchard's confinement arrived, the five-hundred-franc note sent by Lucien, added to Cérizet's second payment, enabled them to meet all the necessary expenses. Eve and her mother and David, who believed that Lucien had forgotten them, were as overjoyed as by the poet's first successes, for his début in journalism made even more commotion in Angoulême than in Paris.

David, slumbering in false security, staggered upon his legs when he received this crushing note from his brother-in-law:

"MY DEAR DAVID,

"I have negotiated with Métivier, three notes for one thousand francs each, purporting to be signed by you, to my order, at one, two and three months. With no alternative but suicide, I resorted to this horrible step, which will doubtless embarrass you sadly. I will explain to you the plight in which I find myself, and I will try to send you the funds when the notes mature.

"Burn my letter, and say nothing to my mother and sister; I confess that I count upon your heroism, well known to

"Your desperate brother,

"LUCIEN DE RUBEMPRE."

"Your poor brother is in terrible distress," said David to his wife, who was just recovering from her confinement, "and I have sent him three notes for a thousand francs each, at one, two, and three months; make a memorandum of them."

Then he went out into the fields to avoid the explanation his wife would demand. But, as she discussed that ominous sentence with her mother, Eve, who was already very much disturbed by her brother's silence for six months past, was so oppressed by evil presentiments, that, in order to dissipate them, she determined to resort to a measure advised by despair. Monsieur de Rastignac the younger had come to pass a few days with his family, and had spoken of Lucien so slightingly that his remarks, with the comments of all those who passed them from mouth to mouth, had at last come to the ears of the journalist's mother and sister. Eve went to Madame de Rastignac's and requested the favor of an interview with her son, to whom she confided her fears, asking him to tell her the truth as to Lucien's situation in Paris. In a twinkling Ève learned of her brother's liaison with Coralie, his duel with Michel Chrestien caused by his treachery to D'Arthez; in a word, all the details of Lucien's life, envenomed by a clever dandy, who knew how to clothe his hatred and envy in the livery of pity, in the friendly guise of provincial pride alarmed for the future of a great man, and in the colors of sincere admiration for the talent of a child of Angoulême in such danger of extinction. He spoke of the mis-

takes Lucien had made which had cost him the patronage of exalted personages and had caused the minister to tear in pieces an ordinance which conferred upon him the arms and the name of Rubempré.

"Madame, if your brother had been well advised, he would be to-day on the high road to distinction and the husband of Madame de Bargeton; but what can you expect? He left her and insulted her. She has become Madame la Comtesse Sixte du Châtelet, to her great regret, for she loved Lucien."

"Is it possible?" cried Madame Séchard.

"Your brother is a young eagle whom the first rays of luxury and glory blinded. When an eagle falls who can say at what depths he will stop? A great man's fall is always in proportion to the height he has attained."

Eve returned home terrified by this last sentence, which pierced her heart like an arrow. Wounded in the most sensitive portions of her heart, she kept her own counsel absolutely; but more than one tear flowed down her cheeks and over the forehead of the child she was nursing. It is so hard to abandon the illusions that family pride justifies and that are born with one's life, that Ève distrusted Eugène de Rastignac and longed to listen to the voice of a true friend. So she wrote a touching letter to D'Arthez, whose address Lucien had given her when he was an enthusiastic admirer of the club, and this is the reply she received:

"MADAME,

"You ask me to tell you the truth concerning the life your brother is leading in Paris, you wish to be enlightened as to his future, and, to induce me to answer your questions freely, you repeat what Monsieur de Rastignac told you, asking me if such and such facts are true. So far as I personally am concerned, madame, I must correct, in Lucien's favor, Monsieur de Rastignac's confidences. Your brother was stricken with remorse, he came and showed me his review of my book and told me that he could not make up his mind to publish it, notwithstanding the risk to a person very dear to him if he should disobey the orders of his party. Alas! madame, it is the writer's task to imagine passions, then he stakes his renown upon expressing them; so I understood that as between a mistress and a friend, the friend must be sacrificed. I made your brother's crime easy, I myself corrected the *libellicide* article and approved it absolutely. You ask me if Lucien has retained my esteem and my friendship. It is very hard for me to answer that question. Your brother has entered upon a course of life in which he will be ruined. At present I still pity him; but soon I shall purposely have forgotten him, not so much because of what he has already done, as of what he is likely to do. Your Lucien is a man of poetic mind, not a poet; he dreams and does not think, he makes a great stir and creates nothing. He is, in short, if you will allow me to say so, like a silly girl who loves to exhibit herself, the most common vice of the Frenchman. Lucien will always sacrifice his best friends to the pleasure of displaying his wit. He would willingly sign a compact with the devil to-morrow if it would ensure him a life of luxury and splendor for a few years. Has he not already done worse than that in bartering his future prospects for the ephemeral pleasure of living publicly with an actress? At this moment that woman's youth and beauty and devotion, for she worships him, conceal from him the perils of a situation which neither glory nor success nor fortune can force society to smile upon. Even so, with every

new fascination your brother will see, as he sees to-day, naught save the enjoyment of the moment. Have no fear that Lucien will go as far as crime, he would not have the strength; but he would accept the results of a crime already committed, he would share its profits without having shared its risks; and that seems a ghastly thing to everybody, even to the greatest villains. He will despise himself, he will repent; but, when the necessity recurs, he will begin again; for he lacks will, he is powerless against the allurements of debauchery, against the longing to satisfy his most trivial ambition. Indolent, like all men of his poetic temperament, he deems himself very clever in dodging obstacles instead of surmounting them. At one moment he will be brave, but at another he will be a coward. And one can no more praise him for his courage than blame him for his cowardice, for Lucien is like a harp whose chords relax or tighten according to the variations of the atmosphere. He is capable of writing a fine book in a paroxysm of wrath or of happiness, and of taking no pleasure in his success after he has so longed for it. In the early days of his life in Paris, he fell under the influence of a young man of no moral principle, whose dexterity and experience dazzled him amid the difficulties of literary life. This prestidigitator turned Lucien's head completely, he enticed him into an undignified existence upon which, unluckily for him, love has cast its spell. Admiration too readily accorded is a sign of weakness: a rope-dancer and a poet should not be paid in the same coin. We have all been wounded by the preference awarded to intrigue and literary rascality over the courage and honor of those who advised Lucien to accept the battle instead of purloining a triumph, to throw himself into the arena instead of blowing a bugle in the orchestra. Society, madame, is by a strange freak of fate, full of indulgence for young men of this description; it is fond of them and allows itself to be deceived by the fair promise of their exterior gifts; it asks nothing from them, excuses all their faults, accords them the privileges of perfect natures by refusing to see any but their good qualities, in a word, it makes

of them its spoiled children. On the other hand, it is severe beyond measure to strong and perfect natures. In adopting this line of conduct, society, although so terribly unjust in appearance, is perhaps sublime. It amuses itself with clowns, seeking nothing but enjoyment at their hands, and speedily forgets them; whereas, before it will bend the knee to true greatness, it exacts from it divine, magnificent achievements. Everything has its own laws; the everlasting diamond must be without blemish, the momentary creation of fashion is entitled to be fickle, eccentric and nerveless. And so, notwithstanding his errors, it may be that Lucien will be marvellously successful, it will be enough if he takes advantage of some happy vein or if he keeps good company; but, if he falls in with a bad angel, he will sink to the lowest depths of hell. He is a brilliant collection of noble qualities upon too light a background; age takes away the flowers and some day only the tissue will remain; and if that is unsubstantial, only a rag can be seen there. As long as Lucien is young, he will make friends; but in what position will he be at thirty? That is the question that all those who love him sincerely should ask themselves. If I had been alone in my opinion of Lucien, perhaps I should have shrunk from grieving you so by my sincerity; but, aside from the fact that to evade by trite remarks the questions asked by your anxious heart seemed to me unworthy of you, whose letter is a cry of anguish, and of myself of whom you express far too flattering an opinion—those of my friends who have known Lucien are unanimous in this judgment of him: therefore, I considered it my duty to tell you the whole truth, terrible as it is. One may expect anything from Lucien, good as well as evil. Such is our opinion, in a single sentence which summarizes this letter. If the vicissitudes of his life, which is now very miserable and dependent entirely upon chance, bring your poet back to you, use all your influence to keep him in the bosom of his family; for, until his character has taken on some firmness, Paris will always be a dangerous place for him. He called you and your husband his guardian angels, and he has

probably forgotten you; but he will remember you, when, beaten down by the tempest, he has only his family to look to for shelter; so keep a place in your heart for him, madame, he will need it.

"Accept, madame, the sincere homage of a man to whom your priceless qualities are well known, and who has the most profound respect for your maternal anxiety. I am, with assurances of the highest consideration,

"Your devoted servant,

"D'ARTHEZ."

Two days after she received this letter, Ève was obliged to take a nurse, for her milk ceased to flow. Having always made a god of her brother, she learned that he had become depraved by the exercise of the noblest faculties; to her mind, in fact, he was rolling in the mire. The noble creature had never learned to palter with honesty, with delicacy, with all the domestic virtues inculcated in the home circle, still so pure and radiant in that distant province. So David was right in his previsions. When the cause of the sorrow that brought that leaden hue to her white forehead was confided by Ève to her husband in one of those unconstrained conversations in which two lovers feel at liberty to tell each other everything, David spoke comforting words to her. Although there were tears in his eyes at the sight of his wife's lovely breasts dried up by grief, and the mother in despair at her inability to do a mother's duty, he comforted her and told her that there was still hope.

"You see, my love, your brother has sinned

through his imagination. It is so natural for a poet to long for his robe of purple and azure, he hurries so eagerly to all sorts of festivities! Our bird is deceived by splendor and luxurious living with such perfect good faith that God will forgive where society condemns him!"

"But he is killing us!" cried the poor woman.

"He is killing us to-day as he saved us a few months ago by sending us the first money he earned," replied the kind-hearted David, who was bright enough to understand that his wife's despair was leading her beyond all bounds and that she would soon return to her love for Lucien.

"Mercier said in his *Tableau de Paris*, about fifty years ago, that literature, poetry, letters, and the sciences, the creations of the brain, could never support a man; and Lucien, in his capacity of poet, refused to trust the experience of five centuries. Crops watered with ink don't ripen—when they ripen at all—until ten or twelve years after the sowing, and Lucien has mistaken the blade for the sheaf. At all events, he will have learned something of life. After being a woman's dupe, he was sure to be the dupe of the world and of false friends. The experience he has had has been expensive, that's all. Our ancestors said: 'If a son returns with both ears and his honor safe and sound, all is well.'"

"Honor!" cried poor Eve. "Alas! in how many virtues Lucien has shown himself lacking! To write against his conscience! To attack his

best friend! To accept money from an actress! To show himself in public with her! To bring us to the gutter!"

"Oh! that's nothing!" cried David, then suddenly checked himself. The secret of his brother-in-law's forgeries almost escaped him, and unluckily Ève, noticing that he left his sentence unfinished, retained some vague uneasiness.

"What! nothing?" she rejoined. "Where are we to get the means to pay three thousand francs?"

"In the first place, we shall soon have to renew the lease of our printing-office to Cérizet. In six months, the fifteen per cent that the Cointets allow him on the work done for them has given him six hundred francs and he has earned five hundred francs on town work."

"If the Cointets knew that, perhaps they wouldn't renew the contract," said Eve; "they will be afraid of him, for Cérizet's a dangerous man."

"Well! what does it matter?" cried Séchard; "in a few days we shall be rich! When Lucien is once rich, my angel, he will have nothing but virtues."

"Oh! David, my dear, my dear, what a terrible thing to say! So, when Lucien is in the clutches of poverty, he would have no strength to resist evil! Your opinion of him is the same as D'Arthez's! There can be no superiority without strength, and Lucien is weak. What is an angel who must not be tempted?"

"A nature that is noble only amid its proper surroundings, in its own sphere, in its heaven. Lucien was not made to fight and I will save him from the necessity. Look! I am too near the result not to initiate you into my methods."

He took from his pocket several sheets of white paper, octavo size, waved them triumphantly in the air and placed them on his wife's knee.

"A ream of this paper, royal octavo size, will not cost more than five francs," he said, bidding Ève feel the specimens, at which she expressed a sort of childish wonder.

"Why, how did you make these experiments?" she asked.

"With an old horsehair sieve I got from Marion."

"And you're not satisfied yet?"

"The problem isn't so much in the manufacture as in the net cost of the pulp. Alas! my love, I am only one of the last to enter upon this difficult road. In 1794 Madame Masson tried to convert printed paper into white paper; she succeeded, but at what a price! In England, about 1800, the Marquis of Salisbury tried, simultaneously with Séguin in France, to use straw in the manufacture of paper. Our common reed, the *arundo phragmitis*, supplied me with the sheets of paper in your hand. But I am going to use nettles and thistles; for, in order to maintain the cheapness of the raw material, we must use vegetable substances that will grow in swamps and unproductive land; they will always be cheap. The whole secret consists in the method

of preparing the stalks. At this moment, my process is not simple enough. But, in spite of that obstacle, I am confident of giving French paper manufacturers the privilege our literature enjoys, of a monopoly of the trade, as the English have a monopoly in iron, coal and common pottery. I mean to be the Jacquart of the paper trade."

Ève rose, moved by a thrill of enthusiastic admiration for David's simplicity; she opened her arms and strained him to her heart, resting her head on his shoulder.

"You reward me as if I had already found it," he said.

Ève's only reply was to raise her lovely face all wet with tears; for a moment she could not utter a word.

'I do not embrace the man of genius," she said, but the comforter! You contrast a rising glory with a fallen glory. You contrast the husband's grandeur with the sorrow that a brother's degradation causes me. Yes, you will be great like the Graindorges, the Rouvets, the Van Robais, like the Persian who gave us the madder, like all the men you have told me of, whose names remain in obscurity because in perfecting industrial methods they did good without parade."

"What are they doing at this hour?" said Boniface.

Cointet the Great was walking on Place du Mûrier with Cérizet, watching the shadows of the husband

and wife upon the muslin curtains; for he came there every night at midnight to talk with Cérizet, who was instructed to watch his former master's every movement.

"He's probably showing her the paper he made this morning," was Cérizet's reply.

"What substances did he use?" inquired the paper manufacturer.

"It's impossible to guess," replied Cérizet; "I climbed up on the roof last night, made a hole in it, and saw my *innocent* boiling his pulp in the copper pan; I examined his materials heaped up in a corner but it was no use; all that I could tell was that the raw material seemed to look like bunches of flax."

"Don't go any farther," said Boniface Cointet to his spy, in a sanctimonious tone, "it would be dishonest!—Madame Séchard will suggest to you to renew your contract for running the printing-office; say that you want to become a master printer, offer half of what the plant and license are worth, and if she accepts, come and tell me. In any event, protract the negotiations. They have no money?"

"Not a sou!" said Cérizet.

"Not a sou," echoed Cointet the Great. "They are mine," he said to himself.

The house of Métivier and the house of Cointet Frères combined the profession of banker with the business of commission merchants in paper in the one case and printers and paper makers in the other; they were very careful, however, to pay no license-fee upon that account. The treasury has not as yet

invented a method of controlling the business of merchants to the extent of compelling those who engage surreptitiously in banking to take out a banker's license, which, in Paris, costs five hundred francs. But Cointet Frères and Métivier, at the risk of being what are called on the Bourse *marrons*, handled some hundreds of thousands of francs between them every quarter in the markets of Paris, Bordeaux and Angoulême. Now on that very evening, the Cointets had received from Paris the notes forged by Lucien in Paris for three thousand francs. Cointet the Great had instantly constructed upon that debt a formidable machine, to be used, as we shall see, against the poor and long-suffering inventor.

The next morning at seven o'clock, Boniface Cointet was walking along the stream that fed his great paper-mill, the noise of which drowned his voice. He was awaiting a young man twenty-nine years old, named Pierre Petit-Claud, who had been for six weeks solicitor to the tribunal of first instance at Angoulême.

"You were at Angoulême college with David Séchard, weren't you?" said Cointet the Great, bowing to the young solicitor, who was too shrewd to fail to obey the rich manufacturer's summons.

"Yes, monsieur," replied Petit-Claud, falling into step with Cointet.

"Have you renewed your acquaintance with him?"

"We have met twice at most since he returned.

It could not be otherwise : I was buried at the Palais or in my office on weekdays ; and on Sundays and fête-days I was hard at work finishing my education, for I had to depend on myself for everything."

Cointet nodded his head in token of his approbation.

" When David and I did meet, he asked me what I was doing. I told him that after studying law at Poitiers, I had become head clerk to Maître Olivet, and that I hoped, one day or another, to procure this practice. I was much better acquainted with Lucien Chardon, who now calls himself Lucien de Rubempré, our great poet, Madame de Bargeton's lover and David Séchard's brother-in-law."

" Then you can go and tell David of your appointment and offer him your services," said Cointet the Great.

" That sort of thing is not done," replied the young solicitor.

" He never had a lawsuit, he has no solicitor, so it can be done," rejoined Cointet, eying the solicitor from the shelter of his blue glasses.

The son of a tailor at L'Houmeau, looked down upon by his college mates, Pierre Petit-Claud seemed to have a considerable quantity of gall mingled with his blood. He had one of those muddy, sallow complexions which denote a sickly constitution, the vigils of poverty, and almost always evil sentiments. There is a quasi-slang expression which fits the young man perfectly : he was domi-

neering and crafty. His shrill voice harmonized with his keen features, his rasping manner and the uncertain color of his magpie eye. The magpie eye is, if we are to believe Napoléon, an indication of dishonesty. "Look at So-and-So," he said to Las Casas at Saint-Helena, referring to one of his confidential servants, whom he was obliged to dismiss for some malfeasance, "I don't know how I could have trusted him so long, for he has the eye of a magpie." And so, when Cointet the Great had closely scrutinized the lank, pock-marked solicitor, with the scanty hair, whose forehead and skull were already beginning to run together, when he saw him posing circumspectly with arms akimbo, he said to himself:

"Here's my man!"

Petit-Claud, steeped in humiliation, consumed by a gnawing craving for success, had had the assurance, although penniless, to purchase his employer's office for thirty thousand francs, relying upon the chances of a wealthy marriage to acquit himself of the debt; and, according to custom, he relied upon his employer to find him a wife, for the predecessor always has an interest in performing that office for his successor in order to obtain payment of his debt. Petit-Claud relied even more upon himself, for he did not lack certain elements of superiority, rarely found in the provinces, the secret of which lay in his hate. Great hatred leads to great efforts.

There is a vast difference between solicitors in

Paris and solicitors in the provinces, and Cointet the Great was too adroit not to make the most of the petty passions which influence these petty solicitors. At Paris an eminent solicitor, and there are many such, possesses in some degree the qualities that distinguish the diplomatist: the number of cases entrusted to him, the magnitude of the interests involved, the wide scope of the questions he has to decide, make it unnecessary for him to depend upon the details of procedure as a source of fortune. To him procedure and pleading are simply offensive or defensive weapons, and not, as formerly, a source of gain. In the provinces, on the other hand, solicitors make much of what is called in Parisian offices the *broutille*, that is to say, the multitude of trivial steps which swell the bill of costs and consume reams of stamped paper. These trifles receive much attention from the provincial solicitor, he sees a chance to pile up costs in cases where the Parisian solicitor would think only of his fees. Fees are what the client owes his solicitor, over and above the costs, for his more or less skilful conduct of his cause. The treasury receives half of the costs, whereas the fees belong to the solicitor *in toto*. Let us say it boldly! the fees paid are rarely equal to the fees demanded and fairly due for services rendered by an able solicitor. Solicitors, advocates and doctors in Paris are like courtesans with their occasional lovers, excessively doubtful of the gratitude of their clients. The client before and after the trial would form an admirable subject, worthy of

Meissonier, for two *genre* pictures, for which honorary solicitors would doubtless pay a high price.

There is another difference between the Parisian solicitor and his confrère in the provinces. The Parisian solicitor rarely appears as a pleader, although he sometimes appears before a judge in chambers on applications for immediate relief; but in 1822, in most of the departments—advocates have multiplied since that time—the solicitors were advocates too and pleaded their own cases. This double life resulted in a double amount of work, which gave the provincial solicitor the intellectual vices of the advocate without relieving him of the burdensome duties of the solicitor. The provincial solicitor became prolix of speech and lost the clearness of judgment that is so essential in the management of cases. Upon doubling his functions thus, a man of superior parts often finds himself transformed into two mediocre men. In Paris, as the solicitor does not spend his strength by talking in court and does not often plead now on one side of a question, now on the other, he is able to preserve some rectitude in his ideas. Although he arranges the forces for the legal fray, although he ransacks the arsenal of expedients afforded by the contradictions of jurisprudence, he retains his own convictions concerning the affair, in which he strains every nerve to pave the way to victory. In a word, thought is much less befuddling than speech. By dint of much talking, a man ends by believing what he says; whereas, one may act against his convic-

tions without destroying them and help to win a bad cause without maintaining that it is just, as the advocate does who tries it. Therefore the old solicitor of Paris is much more likely than the old advocate to make a good judge. Thus a provincial solicitor is likely for many reasons to be a man of only moderate parts: he espouses petty passions, he carries on petty cases, he makes his living by piling up costs, he abuses the Code of Procedure, and he pleads his own cases! In a word, he has many infirmities. So it is that, when a remarkable man is found among provincial solicitors, he is genuinely superior.

"I thought, monsieur, that you requested me to come here to discuss your own business," said Petit-Claud, turning the remark into an epigram by his manner of gazing into Cointet's impenetrable spectacles.

"No beating about the bush," retorted Boniface. "Listen to me."

With those words, pregnant with confidences to come, Cointet took his seat upon a bench and motioned to Petit-Claud to follow his example.

"When Monsieur du Hautoy passed through Angoulême in 1804, on his way to Valentia, as consul, he made the acquaintance of Madame de Senonches, then Mademoiselle Zéphirine, and he had a daughter by her," said Cointet in an undertone in his companion's ear. "Yes," he continued, observing Petit-Claud's start, "Mademoiselle Zéphi-

rine's marriage to Monsieur de Senonches followed close upon her clandestine confinement. The daughter, who was brought up in the country with my mother, is Mademoiselle Françoise de la Haye, now living with Madame de Senonches, who, according to the custom in such cases, is her godmother. As my mother, the wife of old Madame de Cardanet's farmer,—Madame de Cardanet being Mademoiselle Zéphirine's grandmother—knew the secret of the sole heiress of the Cardanets and the Senonches of the elder branch, they placed in my hands for investment the small sum that Monsieur Francis du Hautoy intended in due time for his daughter. I made my fortune with those ten thousand francs which have increased to thirty thousand to-day. Madame de Senonches will provide trousseau, silver-plate and some furniture for her daughter, and I can get the girl for you, my boy," said Cointet, slapping Petit-Claud's knee. "By marrying Françoise de la Haye, your clientage will be increased by a large part of the aristocracy of Angoulême. This left-handed alliance opens a magnificent future to you. The position of an advocate-solicitor may seem sufficient: no one wants anything better, I know."

"What am I to do?" said Petit-Claud eagerly; "Maître Cachan is your solicitor."

"Oh! I shan't leave Cachan suddenly for you, you shall have my business later," said Cointet the Great. "What are you to do, my friend? Why, whatever business David Séchard has to be done.

The poor devil owes notes to the amount of three thousand francs that we hold, he won't pay them, you must defend the suits brought against him in such a way as to make the costs enormous. Have no uneasiness, go right ahead, pile up the items. Doublon, my bailiff, who will have charge of the suit, under Cachan's instructions, won't be inactive. A word to the wise is sufficient. Now young man——"

He made an eloquent pause, during which the men gazed at each other.

"We have never seen each other," continued Cointet, "I have said nothing to you, you know nothing about Monsieur du Hautoy or Madame de Senonches, or Mademoiselle de la Haye; but, when the time comes, two months hence, you will ask that young lady's hand in marriage. When we have to see each other, come here at night. Do not write."

"So you mean to ruin Sechard?" inquired Petit-Claud.

"Not altogether; but he must be kept in prison a month or two."

"For what purpose?"

"Do you think I'm fool enough to tell you? If you're smart enough to guess, you'll be smart enough to hold your tongue."

"Père Séchard is rich," said Petit-Claud, entering at once into Boniface's ideas and discerning a cause of failure.

"So long as the father lives, he won't give his

son a sou, and the ex-printer hasn't any intention yet of having his death ticket printed."

"Agreed!" said Petit-Claud, making up his mind promptly. "I don't ask you for security, I am a solicitor; if you have fooled me, we shall have an account to settle."

"The rascal will go a long way," thought Cointet as they parted.

*

On the day following this consultation, April 30, the Cointets caused the first of the notes forged by Lucien to be presented. Unluckily the note was handed to Madame Séchard, who, detecting at once the imitation of her husband's signature by Lucien, called David and said to him, point-blank:

"You didn't sign that note!"

"No," he said. "Your brother was in such a hurry that he signed for me."

Ève handed the note back to the messenger from the house of Cointet Frères, saying:

"We are not prepared to pay it."

Then, feeling that her strength was failing her, she went up to her room, whither David followed her.

"My dear," said Ève in a feeble voice, "run to Messieurs Cointet, they will have some consideration for you; beg them to wait, and remind them, too, that they will owe you a thousand francs when Cérizet's lease is renewed."

David went at once to his enemies' camp. A proof-reader can always become a printer, but a skilful typographer is not always a good man of

business; and so David, whose knowledge of business was very limited, stood speechless before Cointet the Great, when, after he had stammered out his excuses and proffered his request with a choking sensation in his throat and a wildly beating heart, he received this reply:

"This has nothing to do with us, we received the note from Métivier, Métivier will make us whole; apply to Monsieur Métivier."

"Oh!" said Ève, when David told her of this reply, "if the note is returned to Monsieur Métivier, we need have no fear."

The next day, Victor-Ange-Herménégilde Doublon, Messieurs Cointet's bailiff, protested the note at two o'clock, an hour when Place du Mûrier is full of people; and although he made a pretence of talking with Marion and Kolb at the hall door, the fact of the protest was none the less known throughout Angoulême during the afternoon. Indeed, how could the hypocritical acts of Master Doublon, who was instructed by Cointet the Great to proceed with the utmost consideration, save Ève and David from the commercial ignominy resulting from a suspension of payment? let the reader judge for himself! In this connection a long digression will seem too short. Ninety readers in a hundred will be entertained by the following details as much as by the most exciting novelty. And thus will be demonstrated once more the truth of the axiom: *There is nothing about which so little is known as that which everybody ought to know, the* LAW!

Beyond question, the mechanism of one of our banking institutions, truthfully described, will interest the majority of Frenchmen as deeply as a book of travel in a foreign country. When a tradesman sends one of his notes from the town where his business is located to a person living in another place, as David was supposed to have done to accommodate Lucien, he changes the simple transaction of a note given between two tradesmen of the same town to a commercial transaction resembling in some respects a bill of exchange drawn in one place upon another. Thus, when he accepted the three notes from Lucien, Métivier was obliged, in order to obtain the amount for which they were drawn, to send them to Messieurs Cointet Frères, his correspondents in Angoulême. This resulted in an initial loss to Lucien, designated by the name of *exchange*, which was reckoned at so much per cent in addition to the discount. The Séchard notes therefore had passed into the category of banking business. You would not believe how the debtor's position is changed by the conjunction of the august title of creditor with that of banker in the same person. Thus, *in the banking business*—note that expression—as soon as payment is refused upon a note sent from Paris to Angoulême, the bankers owe it to one another to make at once what is called a *return—compte de retour*. Punning aside, no romancer ever invented a more improbable *tale—conte* —than that; for these are the ingenious jests *à la Mascarille* which a certain article in the Commercial

Code authorizes, and a recital of which will show you how many atrocities are covered by that terrible word: *legality!*

As soon as Master Doublon had caused his protest to be recorded, he carried it himself to Messieurs Cointet Frères. The bailiff had an account with those lynxes of Angoulême and gave them six months' credit, which Cointet the Great dragged out to a year by his manner of making a settlement, saying to the under-lynx from month to month: "Do you want some money, Doublon?" Nor was that all! Doublon favored that powerful house by making them a discount, so that the house made something on every document, a mere pittance, one franc fifty centimes on a protest! Cointet the Great seated himself calmly at his desk and took up a small piece of paper stamped with thirty-five centimes, talking all the while with Doublon to pick up information from him touching the real condition of various tradesmen.

"Well, are you satisfied with little Gannerac?"

"He's doing very well. Deuce take it, a wagon—"

"Ah! you see he has a hard road to travel! I've heard his wife cost him a great deal—"

"Cost *him?*" cried Doublon with a cunning air.

The lynx, having finished preparing his paper, wrote in a round hand the sinister title beneath which he drew up the following account:—*Sic!*—

COMPTE DE RETOUR ET FRAIS

On a note for ONE THOUSAND FRANCS, *dated Angoulême, February tenth, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two, signed by* SÉCHARD FILS, *to the order of* LUCIEN CHARDON, *called* DE RUBEMPRÉ, *and endorsed to the order of* MÉTIVIER *and to our order, due on the thirtieth of April last and protested by* DOUBLON, *bailiff, on the first day of May, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two.*

	fr.	c.
Principal	1,000	—
Protest	12	35
Commission at ½ per cent . . .	5	—
Broker's commission at ¼ per cent .	2	50
Stamps for our redraft and this return	1	35
Interest and postage	3	—
	1024	20
Exchange at 1¼ per cent on 1,024 20 .	13	25
TOTAL	1037	45

One thousand thirty-seven francs forty-five centimes, for which sum we reimburse ourselves by our sight draft on Monsieur Métivier, Rue Serpente, Paris, to the order of Monsieur Gannerac, L'Houmeau.

Angoulême, May 2, 1822.

COINTET FRÈRES

At the foot of this little memorandum, drawn with all the skill of a regular practitioner, for he was

talking with Doublon all the time, Cointet wrote the following declaration:

"We, the undersigned, Postel, master druggist of L'Houmeau, and Gannerac, common carrier of that town, certify that the rate of exchange upon Paris is one and one fourth per cent.

"Angoulême, May 3, 1822."

"Here, Doublon, be good enough to go to Postel and Gannerac and ask them to sign this declaration, and bring it back to me to-morrow morning."

And Doublon, who was perfectly familiar with these instruments of torture, took his leave as unconcerned as if what he was about to do were the simplest thing in the world. Evidently the protest had been delivered, as is done in Paris, in an envelope, but all Angoulême knew of the unfortunate condition of David Séchard's affairs. And what accusations did not his apathy bring upon him! Some said that he was ruined by his excessive affection for his wife; others accused him of caring too much for his brother-in-law. And what atrocious conclusions every one drew from these premises! One should never espouse the interests of one's relations! They approved Père Séchard's harsh treatment of his son and admired him for it!

And now do all ye who, for any reason whatsoever, *forget to honor your obligations*, examine carefully the process—the perfectly legitimate process—by which, in ten minutes, a capital of one thousand francs is made to produce twenty-eight francs interest, in the banking business:

The first item of the *compte de retour* is the only incontestable one.

The second item includes the shares of the treasury and the bailiff. The six francs accruing to the public purse, for recording the debtor's chagrin and furnishing the stamped paper, will keep the abuse alive for a long time to come! And then this item, you know, contains a profit of one franc fifty centimes to the banker, the amount of the allowance made by Doublon.

The commission of one-half per cent, covered by the third item, is charged on the ingenious pretext that to send a note elsewhere for payment is equivalent, in the banking business, to discounting it. Although the two things seem absolutely opposed to each other, there is no difference between giving away a thousand francs and not putting them in your cash-box. Whoever has offered notes for discount knows that, in addition to the six per cent legally due, the discounter deducts, under the modest name of commission, a certain percentage above the legal rate, representing the interest to which the genius with which he multiplies his funds entitles him. The more money he can make the more he demands of you. Therefore one should have his notes discounted by fools, it is cheaper. But are there any fools in the banking business?

The law requires the banker to have the rate of exchange certified by a broker. In places so unfortunate as to have no Bourse, two merchants are substituted for the broker. The broker's commis-

sion, so-called, is fixed at a quarter of one per cent of the face of the protested note. The custom was introduced of including that commission as paid to the merchants who replaced the broker, but the banker simply puts it in his pocket. Hence the third item of this charming account.

The fourth item includes the cost of the bit of stamped paper on which the *compte de retour* is drawn up and that of the stamp on what is so ingeniously called the *redraft*, that is to say, the new draft drawn by the banker on his confrère, to make himself good.

The fifth item includes the cost of postage and the legal interest of the sum during the time that it may remain unpaid after maturity.

Lastly the exchange, the very purpose for which banks exist, represents the cost of forwarding money from one place to another. Now, dissect the account, in which fifteen and five make twenty-two, according to Polichinello's style of counting in the Neapolitan ballad so well sung by Lablache! Evidently the signatures of Messieurs Postel and Gannerac were a mere accommodation: the Cointets would at need certify for Gannerac what Gannerac certified for the Cointets. It was a practical illustration of the old proverb: *Pass me the rhubarb and I'll pass you the senna.* Messieurs Cointet Frères having an account current with Métivier, had no need to draw upon him. As between themselves a note returned simply required one line more on the debit or credit side of the account.

Thus this imaginary account really reduces itself

to the thousand francs owed, the thirteen francs for the protest, and one-half of one per cent for one month's interest after maturity, in all, perhaps, a thousand and eighteen francs.

If a great banking house has on an average one *compte de retour* every day on a note for a thousand francs, it receives twenty-eight francs a day by the grace of God and the constitution of the banking business, a formidable form of royalty invented by the Jews in the 12th century, which dominates thrones and nations to-day. In other words, a thousand francs would be worth to that house twenty-eight francs a day or ten thousand two hundred and twenty francs a year. Triple the above average and you find an income of thirty thousand francs from imaginary capital. So it is that nothing is more fondly cherished and cultivated than the *compte de retour*. If David Séchard had come to pay his note on May 3d, or even on the day following the protest, Messieurs Cointet Frères would have said to him: "We have returned your note to Monsieur Métivier!" even if the note were still lying on their desk. The *compte de retour* is due in the evening of the day of protest. This, in the language of provincial banking circles is called *making the crowns sweat*. The item of postage alone is worth some twenty thousand francs a year to the house of Keller, which corresponds with the whole world, and the *comptes de retour* pay for Madame la Baronne de Nucingen's box at the Italiens, her carriage and her toilette. The *postage* is a most out-

rageous swindle because bankers cover ten such matters in ten lines of a single letter. Strangely enough, the treasury comes in for its share in this premium extorted from misfortune, and thus the public purse is swollen by the disasters of business men. So far as the bank is concerned, it tosses to the debtor from the vantage ground of its counting-room these words, overflowing with good sense: "Why aren't you ready to pay?" to which unfortunately there is no reply to be made. Thus the *compte de retour* is a *conte* full of fictitious items, of which debtors who reflect upon these instructive pages will ever after have a salutary dread.

On May 4th, Monsieur Métivier received the *compte de retour* from Messieurs Cointet Frères with orders to prosecute Monsieur Lucien Chardon called De Rubempré, without mercy, in Paris.

A few days later Ève received, in reply to the letter she wrote Monsieur Métivier, the following brief note, which reassured her completely:

TO MONSIEUR SÉCHARD FILS, PRINTER, ANGOULÊME

"I received in due course your esteemed favor of the 5th instant. I understand from your statements relative to the note protested for non-payment on the 30th of April last, that you accommodated your brother-in-law, Monsieur de Rubempré, who is leading such an extravagant life that it would be rendering you a service to compel him to pay: he is in a situation where he cannot long evade pursuit. If your honored brother-in-law should fail to pay, I should rely upon the loyalty of your old house, and I am, as always,

"Your humble servant,

"MÉTIVIER."

"Well," said Ève to David, "my brother will know from this prosecution that we couldn't pay the note."

What a change in Ève's feelings did those words indicate! The increasing love inspired by David's character, as she came to know him better and better, took the place of sisterly affection in her heart. But to how many illusions she said adieu!

Now let us follow the travels of the *compte de retour* in Paris. A third holder—the commercial title of him who holds a note by transfer—is at liberty by the terms of the law, to proceed against that one of the various parties to the note who offers him the best chance of obtaining his money promptly. By virtue of this power, Lucien was proceeded against by Monsieur Métivier's bailiff. The various steps in this utterly fruitless action were as follows. Métivier, behind whom Cointet Frères screened themselves, knew that Lucien was insolvent; but, as a matter of law, insolvency *in fact* does not exist *in law* until it has been established.

So the impossibility of obtaining payment of the note from Lucien was established in the following manner:

On the 5th of May, Métivier's bailiff notified Lucien of the protest at Angoulême and the *compte de retour*, summoning him before the Tribunal of Commerce in Paris to listen to a number of things, among others that an order would issue for his arrest as a tradesman. When Lucien, who was then leading the life of a stag at bay, had read this scrawl, he received notice of a judgment obtained against

him by default at the Tribunal of Commerce. Coralie, his mistress, having no idea of the truth, imagined that Lucien had accommodated his brother-in-law; she gave him all the documents together, too late. An actress sees too many actors as bailiffs in vaudevilles to believe in stamped paper.

Lucien's eyes filled with tears, he was sorry for Séchard, he was ashamed of his forgery, he intended to pay the notes. Naturally he consulted his friends as to what he should do to gain time. But when Lousteau, Blondet, Bixiou and Nathan had told him that a poet need have but little fear of the Tribunal of Commerce, which was established to deal with litigation between shopkeepers, the poet was already under execution. He saw at his door the little yellow placard that stains the *portières*, that has a most astringent effect on credit, that strikes terror to the heart of the smallest creditors, and, more than all else, that freezes the blood in the veins of poets who are emotional enough to become attached to bits of wood, scraps of silk, heaps of colored wool and the gewgaws called furniture.

When they came to remove Coralie's belongings, the author of *Les Marguerites* called upon a friend of Bixiou, one Desroches, a solicitor, who began to laugh when he saw Lucien so dismayed over such a small matter.

"It's nothing, my dear man. You want to gain time?"

"As much as possible."

"Very good, resist execution of the judgment.

Go to a friend of mine, Masson, a member of that bar, carry him your papers, and he will renew your opposition, will appear for you and dispute the jurisdiction of the Tribunal of Commerce. There won't be the least difficulty about it, for you are a well-known journalist. If you are summoned before the Civil Tribunal, come and see me, I will attend to that: I undertake to send the fellows about their business who are trying to annoy the lovely Coralie."

Lucien was summoned before the Civil Tribunal on May 28th, and judgment was rendered against him more promptly than Desroches thought, for the suit was pressed with the utmost rigor. When a new levy was made, when the yellow placard once more embellished the architrave of Coralie's door and they undertook to remove the furniture, Desroches, a little shamefaced at having *allowed himself to be pinched* by his confrère—to use his own expression—resisted sturdily, claiming and justly too, that the furniture belonged to Mademoiselle Coralie, and he applied to a judge in chambers for a temporary injunction. Upon hearing the application, the president of the tribunal sent the parties into court, where the actress was adjudged to be the owner of the furniture and judgment was entered to that effect. Métivier appealed from the judgment and his appeal was dismissed by decree of June 30th.

On August 7th, Maître Cachan received by the diligence an enormous package of papers endorsed:

MÉTIVIER VS. SÉCHARD AND LUCIEN CHARDON

The first paper was the following pretty little memorandum, the accuracy of which is warranted, for it is copied from the original:

Note of April 30 last, signed by Séchard Fils, order of Lucien de Rubempré.

		fr.	c.
(*2d May.*)	*Compte de retour* . . .	1037	45
(*5th May.*)	*Notice of compte de retour and protest with summons to appear before Tribunal of Commerce, Paris, on May 7th* . .	8	75
(*7th May.*)	*Judgment by default, order of arrest*	35	—
(*10th May.*)	*Notice of judgment* . .	8	50
(*12th May.*)	*Execution*	5	50
(*14th May.*)	*Report of levy* . . .	16	—
(*18th May.*)	*Report of posting of placards* .	15	25
(*19th May.*)	*Insertion in newspaper* . .	4	—
(*24th May.*)	*Report of verification of inventory prior to removal of goods, and of opposition to execution of judgment by Sieur Lucien de Rubempré*	12	—
(*27th May.*)	*Judgment of tribunal, decreeing, upon the claim of respondent duly renewed, that the parties be sent before the Civil Tribunal*	35	—
(*28th May.*)	*Summons by Metivier for speedy hearing before the Civil Tribu-*		
	Carried forward	1177	45

		fr.	c.
	Brought forward	1177	45
	nal with appointment of solicitor	6	50
(*2d June.*)	*Double judgment, ordering Lucien Chardon to pay costs of the compte de retour and plaintiff to defray his own costs before the Tribunal of Commerce* . .	150	—
(*6th June.*)	*Notice of the above* . . .	10	—
(*15th June.*)	*Execution*	5	50
(*19th June.*)	*Report of levy, and of opposition thereto by Demoiselle Coralie, who claims that the furniture belongs to her and demands to be heard before the judge at once, if her claim is unheeded*	20	—
	Order of the president, who sends the parties into open court	40	—
(*19th June.*)	*Judgment awarding furniture to Demoiselle Coralie aforesaid* .	250	—
(*20th June.*)	*Appeal by Métivier* . .	17	—
(*30th June.*)	*Decree affirming judgment* .	250	—
	TOTAL	1926	45
Note of 31st of May, compte de retour . .		1037	45
Notice to Lucien		8	75
	TOTAL	1046	20

	fr.	c.
Note of 30th of June, compte de retour	1037	45
Notice to Lucien	8	75
TOTAL	1046	20

These documents were accompanied by a letter wherein Métivier instructed Maître Cachan, solicitor at Angoulême, to proceed against David Séchard by all lawful means. Master Victor-Ange-Herménégilde Doublon summoned David Séchard therefore to appear before the Tribunal of Commerce of Angoulême on July 3d, to make answer to a claim for the sum of four thousand and eighteen francs and eighty-five centimes, the total amount of the three notes and costs already incurred. On the morning of the day when Doublon was to place in her own hands a writ of execution for that sum, enormous in her eyes, Ève received this crushing letter written by Métivier:

"TO MONSIEUR SÉCHARD FILS, PRINTER, ANGOULÊME.

"Your brother-in-law, Monsieur Chardon, is a man utterly lacking in good faith, who placed his furniture in the name of an actress with whom he is living; you ought, monsieur, in fairness, to have given me warning of that circumstance and not have allowed me to resort to fruitless proceedings against him, for you did not answer my letter of May 10th last. Do not think ill of me therefore for asking you to pay the three notes and all my outlay immediately.

"Accept my humble respects.

"MÉTIVIER."

Having heard nothing more of the forged notes, Ève, knowing little of commercial law, thought that her brother had atoned for his crime by paying them.

"My dear," said she to her husband, "run at once to Petit-Claud; explain our position and ask his advice."

"My friend," said the poor printer as he entered his old schoolmate's office, having run thither in hot haste, "I didn't know, when you came to tell me of your appointment and offered your services, that I should need them so soon."

Petit-Claud studied the noble, thoughtful face of the man sitting in an armchair opposite him, for he did not listen to the details of the business, knowing far more about them than did he who was explaining them to him. When he saw Séchard enter his office in evident trouble, he had said to himself:

"The trick is played."

Such scenes are often acted in advocates' offices.

"Why do the Cointets persecute him?" Petit-Claud asked himself.

Solicitors have a way of delving into their clients' minds as well as into their adversaries'; they must know the wrong as well as the right side of the judicial woof.

"You can gain time," replied Petit-Claud at last, when Séchard had finished. "How much do you need? something like three or four months?"

"Four months! oh! I am saved!" cried David, to whom Petit-Claud seemed a veritable angel.

"Very well, no one shall touch any of your furniture, and they can't arrest you inside of three or four months. But it will be very expensive," said Petit-Claud.

"Eh! what do I care for that?" cried Séchard.

"You are expecting to receive some money; are you sure of it?" asked the solicitor, surprised at the readiness with which his client fell into the trap.

"In three months I shall be rich," replied the inventor, with the true inventor's confidence.

"Your father isn't underground yet," Petit-Claud replied, "he intends to remain among his vines."

"Do you suppose I reckon on my father's death?" rejoined David. "I am on the track of an industrial secret that will enable me to manufacture paper as substantial as Holland paper, without a thread of cotton, and at fifty per cent below the net price of cotton pulp."

"Why, that's a fortune," cried Petit-Claud, who at once divined the scheme of Cointet the Great.

"A great fortune, my friend, for in ten years we shall need ten times more paper than is used to-day. Journalism will be the mania of our time!"

"Does no one know your secret?"

"No one except my wife."

"You haven't told your plans, your programme to anybody—the Cointets for example?"

"I have spoken to them about it, but only in a vague way, I think."

A flash of generosity lighted up the bitter soul of

Petit-Claud, who tried to reconcile his own interest and Cointet's and David's.

"Listen, David; we are old schoolfellows and I will defend you; but, understand, this defence, in the teeth of the law, will cost you five or six thousand francs!—Don't involve your fortune. I imagine you will be obliged to share the profits of your invention with one of our manufacturers. You will look twice before you buy or build a paper-mill. Besides that, you will have to take out a patent. All that will take time and money. The bailiffs may come down upon you too soon in spite of the roundabout chase we will lead them.'

"I shall keep my secret!" replied David with the frank simplicity of the scholar.

"All right, your secret will be your plank of safety," rejoined Petit-Claud, repulsed in his first loyal impulse to try and avoid a lawsuit by a compromise, "I don't want to know it; but listen to what I say; try and work in the bowels of the earth, so that no one can see you or suspect your methods, otherwise your plank will be stolen from under your feet. An inventor often hides an idiot under his skin! You think too much of your secrets to be able to think of everything. People will end by suspecting the object of your investigations and you are surrounded by manufacturers! So many manufacturers, so many enemies! I look upon you as a beaver in the midst of a party of hunters; don't let them have your skin."

"Thanks, my dear comrade, I have said all that

to myself," cried Séchard; "but I am obliged to you for showing so much forethought and solicitude! I don't consider myself in this matter. Twelve hundred francs a year would be enough for me, and my father must leave me at least three times as much some day. I live in my love and my thoughts —a heavenly life. Lucien and my wife—they are the ones for whom I am working."

"Well, sign this power of attorney and think of nothing but your discovery. When the time comes for you to go into hiding because the order for your arrest is issued, I will let you know the day before; we must provide for everything. And let me advise you not to let any one into your house of whom you are not as sure as of yourself."

"Cérizet refused to renew the contract for working my printing-office, and that is the cause of our little embarrassment. No one is left in my house except Marion, Kolb, an Alsatian, who is like a faithful dog, my wife, and my mother-in-law."

"Look you," said Petit-Claud, "distrust the dog."

"You don't know him!" cried David. "Kolb is like another myself."

"Are you willing to let me put him to the test?"

"Yes," said Séchard.

"Well, good-morning; but send lovely Madame Séchard to me, a power from your wife is indispensable. And remember, my friend, that your affairs are on fire," said Petit-Claud, warning him thus of

all the legal catastrophes that were about to burst upon him.

"Here am I with one foot in Burgundy and one in Champagne," said Petit-Claud to himself, after he had escorted his friend David Séchard to the door of his office.

*

A prey to the distress due to lack of money, a prey to the anxiety caused by his wife's condition, and heart-broken by Lucien's infamy, David was still seeking the solution of his problem; and as he walked from his own house to Petit-Claud's office, he was absent-mindedly chewing a nettle stalk that he had put in water, hoping to find some method of steeping the stalks used as material for his pulp. He wished to replace, by some equivalent process, the various methods in operation for macerating, weaving, or employing everything used in the production of thread or linen or rags. As he was walking home, well pleased with his conference with his friend Petit-Claud, he found a ball of pulp between his teeth; he took it in his hand, stretched it out and saw that it was superior to all the substances he had obtained; for the principal drawback of pulp obtained from vegetables is a lack of ductility. For instance, straw makes a brittle paper, resonant, so to speak, and metallic. Such good luck falls to the lot of none save the bold investigators of natural causes.

"I must find a way," he said to himself, "to do

with a machine and a chemical agent what I have just done mechanically."

And he appeared before his wife, happy in his belief in approaching triumph.

"Oh! my angel, have no fear!" he said, seeing that his wife had been weeping. "Petit-Claud promises us a few months of tranquillity. It will make more costs; but, as he said when I left him: 'All Frenchmen have the right to make their creditors wait, as long as they end by paying principal, interest and costs!' Well we shall pay—"

"And what about living?" said poor Ève, who thought of everything.

"Ah! that is true," replied David, putting his hand to his ear, an inexplicable gesture resorted to by almost all embarrassed people.

"Mother will take care of our little Lucien and I can go back to my work," she said.

"Ève! O my darling Ève!" cried David, throwing his arms about his wife and pressing her to his heart. "A short distance from here, Ève, at Saintes, in the sixteenth century, one of the greatest of Frenchmen—for he was not only the inventor of enamels, he was also the glorious precursor of Buffon, Cuvier, he discovered the science of geology in advance of them, the excellent man!—Bernard Palissy suffered from the passion of all investigators of secrets, but he had his wife and children and a whole faubourg against him. His wife sold his tools. He wandered about the country, unap-

preciated, followed, pointed at!—But I, on the other hand, am loved—"

"Dearly loved!" interposed Ève, with the calm expression of love that is sure of itself.

"So I can endure all that poor Bernard Palissy endured, the inventor of the pottery of Ecouen, whom Charles IX. excepted from the Saint Bartholomew massacre, and who at last, old and wealthy and honored, delivered, in the face of all Europe, public lectures on his *science of earths*, as he called it."

"While my fingers have the strength to hold an iron, you shall want for nothing!" cried the poor woman with an accent of the most profound devotion. "At the time I was forewoman for Madame Prieur, I had a friend named Basine Clerget, a fine girl, Postel's cousin; well, Basine has just brought home my washing and told me that she has succeeded Madame Prieur; I'll go and work for her."

"Ah! you won't work there long!" said Séchard, "I have found it."

For the first time the sublime confidence in success which sustains inventors and gives them courage to plunge into the virgin forests of the land of discoveries, was greeted by Ève with a smile that was almost sad, and David hung his head disconsolately.

"Oh! my love, I am not laughing at you, I do not doubt," cried the lovely Ève, kneeling at her husband's feet. "But I see how wise you have been to keep absolutely silent concerning your experiments and your hopes. Yes, my dear, inventors

should conceal the painful birth of their glory from everybody, even from their wives! A wife is still a woman. Your Eve could not keep back a smile when she heard you say: 'I have found it!' for the seventeenth time within a month."

David began to laugh so frankly at himself that Ève took his hand and kissed it reverently. It was a blissful moment, one of the roses of love and attachment that bloom beside the most desolate paths of poverty and sometimes at the foot of precipices.

Ève's courage redoubled when misfortune fell upon them with redoubled fury. Her husband's greatness, his inventor's simplicity, the tears she sometimes detected in the eyes of that man of heart and poetic temperament, all tended to develop in her an incredible power of resistance. Once more she resorted to the method that had succeeded so well before. She wrote to Monsieur Métivier to advise him of the sale of the printing-office, offering to pay his claim out of the price received for it and begging him not to ruin David by useless costs. On receipt of that sublime letter, Métivier was as silent as the dead; his chief clerk replied that in Monsieur Métivier's absence he could not take it upon himself to stop proceedings, for that was not his employer's way of doing business. Ève then proposed to renew the notes and pay all the costs, and the clerk consented, on condition that David Séchard's father would guarantee the payment by indorsing the new notes. Ève thereupon walked to Marsac, accom-

panied by her mother and Kolb. She bearded the old vinegrower, she was fascinating, she succeeded in smoothing the wrinkles from his aged face; but when, with trembling heart, she mentioned the indorsement, she marked a complete and sudden change upon that flushed and bloated countenance.

"If I left my son at liberty to put his hand to my lips, on the edge of my strong box, he'd plunge it into my very bowels and take all there is!" he cried. "All children like to draw at their pleasure from their father's purse. Look at me! how did I get along? I never cost my parents a sou. Your printing-office is empty. The rats and mice are all there are to run the presses. You are beautiful and I love you; you are a careful, hard-working wife; but my son!—Do you know what David is? well, he's a do-nothing bookworm. If I had put him to work, as I was put to work, without knowing his letters, and made him a *bear*, like his father, he'd have money in the Funds.—Ah! that boy is my cross! And, unluckily he's unique, for the second *impression* will never be made! And then he makes you unhappy—"

Eve protested by an emphatic gesture of denial.

"Yes, he does," he continued, in response to her gesture, "you had to take a nurse, for your grief dried up your milk. I know everything, you see! you're in court and you're the talk of the town. I was only a *bear*, I'm no scholar, I never was proof-reader for Messieurs Didot, the glory of typography; but I never received a piece of stamped paper! Do

you know what I say to myself as I go about among my vines, trimming them and picking the grapes and doing business in my small way?—I say to myself: 'My poor old fellow, you're giving yourself a heap of trouble, you're piling up crown on crown, you'll leave a fine property, and it will all go to the bailiffs and lawyers,—or else for ideas, for mere whims.'—Look you, my child, you're the mother of that little boy, who, I thought, had his grandfather's big nose in the middle of his face the day I stood sponsor for him with Madame Chardon; well, just think not so much of Séchard and more of that little rascal. I haven't any confidence in anybody but you. You can prevent the squandering of my property—my poor property."

"But, my dear Papa Séchard, your son will be your glory, and you'll see him some day rich on his own account, with the cross of the Legion of Honor in his buttonhole—"

"What will he do to get that?" queried the vine-grower.

"You will see! But, meanwhile, would three thousand francs ruin you? With three thousand francs you could put an end to all proceedings. Well, if you have no confidence in him, lend them to me; I'll pay them back to you, you can have my marriage-portion and the wages I earn, for security."

"So David Séchard has really been sued?" cried the old man, amazed to find that what he thought a mere slander was true. "That's what it

is to know how to sign your name!—And my rent! —Oh! my girl, I must go to Angoulême to protect myself and consult Cachan, my solicitor. You did an excellent thing when you came here. A man warned is as good as two!"

After a struggle lasting two hours, Ève was compelled to take her leave, vanquished by this unanswerable argument: "Women know nothing about business." As she had had a vague idea that she would succeed in her mission, Ève returned from Marsac to Angoulême almost crushed. She reached home just in time to receive notice of the judgment requiring Séchard to pay the whole amount to Métivier. In the provinces the appearance of a bailiff at the door of a house is an event; but Doublon had come there too often of late for the neighborhood not to talk about it. So that Ève no longer dared to leave the house for fear of hearing people whispering about her.

"Oh! brother! brother!" cried the poor girl, as she rushed into the hall and up the stairs, "I can never forgive you, unless it was a question of—"

"Alas!" said Séchard, coming to meet her, "it was a question with him of refraining from suicide."

"Then let us never speak of it again," she replied gently. "The woman who enticed him into that den of iniquity, Paris, is very wicked!—and your father, my David, is very pitiless! Let us suffer in silence."

A discreet knock at the door checked some loving

reply on David's part, and Marion appeared with the tall and bulky Kolb in tow.

"Madame," said she, "Kolb and I have seen that monsieur and madame were in great trouble; and, as we have saved up eleven hundred francs between us, we thought that we couldn't do better than to put them in madame's hands."

"*In matame's hants,*" echoed Kolb enthusiastically.

"Kolb," cried David, "we shall never be able to pay our debt of gratitude to you! Take a thousand francs to Cachan, the solicitor, on account, but demand a receipt; we will keep the rest. Kolb, let no power on earth tear a word from you about what I am doing, about the hours I am away from home, or about what you may see me bring back with me, and when I send you after herbs, you know, be sure that no human eye sees you. They will try to tempt you, my good Kolb, perhaps they will offer you thousands, tens of thousands of francs to speak."

"*Dey gould ofer me millions and I vould not zay ein vort! I know de milidary orders, don'd I?*"

"You are warned, now go; and ask Monsieur Petit-Claud to be present when you hand the money to Monsieur Cachan."

"*Ya,*" exclaimed the Alsatian, "*I hope to pe rich enough zum tay to tap dat man of choostice on der het. I do nod luf his vace!*"

"He's a good man, madame," said the buxom Marion, "he's as strong as a Turk and as gentle as

a lamb. There's a man to make a woman happy! He was the one that suggested putting our wages—he calls it *vaitches!*—in your hands. Poor man! if he doesn't talk well, he means well, and I can understand him all the same. He has an idea of going to work for somebody else so as not to cost us anything."

"One would like to be rich simply to be able to reward these honest people," said Séchard, looking at his wife.

Ève thought it all very natural, she was not surprised to find hearts on the level of her own. Her attitude would have laid bare the beauty of her character to the most stupid of mortals, even to an indifferent person.

"You will be rich, my dear monsieur, your bread is all cooked," cried Marion; "your father's just bought a farm, he's making money, you know!"

Under the circumstances, did not these words, uttered by Marion to lessen in some respect the merit of her act, betray an exquisite sense of delicacy?

Like all human things, French procedure has its defects; however, like a two-edged sword, it serves as well for defence as for attack. Moreover, there is this amusing thing about it, that, if two solicitors understand each other—and they may do so without exchanging a word, simply by their course of procedure—a lawsuit resembles war as it was carried on by the first Maréchal de Biron, to whom his son, at the siege of Rouen, proposed a method of taking the town in two days: "You seem to be in a great

hurry to go home and plant cabbages." Two generals can make a war last forever by sparing their troops and taking no decisive action, according to the method of Austrian commanders, who are never reprimanded by the Aulic Council for having missed a combination in order to let their soldiers finish their soup. Maître Cachan, Petit-Claud and Doublon managed affairs even better than the Austrian generals—they took for their model an Austrian of ancient times, Fabius *Cunctator!*

Petit-Claud, as full of tricks as a mule, soon realized all the advantages of his position. As soon as payment of future costs was guaranteed by Cointet the *Great*, he determined to vie with Cachan in strategy, and to display his genius in the paper manufacturer's eyes, creating items of cost which would fall upon Métivier's shoulders. But, unfortunately for the renown of that Figaro of the bar, the historian must pass over his exploits as if he were walking on burning coals. A single memorandum of costs, like the one prepared at Paris, will be sufficient, doubtless, for the history of contemporaneous manners. Let us imitate the style of the bulletins from the Grande Armée; for the more rapid the enumeration of Petit-Claud's acts and manœuvres, the more useful this exclusively legal page, so far as a proper understanding of the narrative is concerned.

David, having been summoned to appear before the Tribunal of Commerce at Angoulême on July 3d, failed to appear and was defaulted; notice of judg-

ment by default was served on him July 8th. On the 10th, Doublon took out a writ of execution, and on the 12th attempted a levy, which Petit-Claud resisted, summoning Métivier to appear two weeks thereafter. Métivier considered the time too long, applied the next day for speedy hearing, and on the 19th obtained a judgment quashing David's defence. This judgment, formal notice of which was served on the 21st, authorized an execution on the 22d, notice of issuance of an order of arrest on the 23d and a report of the levy on the 24th. This fierce chase for a levy was curbed by Petit-Claud, who entered an appeal to the Royal Court. This appeal dragged Métivier to Poitiers.

"Good!" said Petit-Claud to himself, "we shall stay there some time."

Once the storm was directed upon Poitiers, a solicitor practising in the Royal Court being retained and instructed by Petit-Claud, that shifty advocate caused David Séchard to be summoned into court by Madame Séchard on an application for division of their property, requesting a speedy hearing. He *rushed matters*—to use an expression current at the Palais—in such a way as to obtain his judgment for the division on July 28th, he inserted it in the *Courrier de la Charente*, gave due notice of it and, on August 1st, he swore to Madame Séchard's claim before a notary, thus making her a creditor of her husband in the trifling sum of ten thousand francs which the amorous David had named as her dowry in the marriage contract, and to secure payment

thereof had transferred to her the furniture of the printing-office and of the conjugal abode.

While Petit-Claud was thus putting the household effects under cover, he prevailed at Poitiers on the claim on which his appeal was based. He contended that David was not chargeable with the costs incurred in the proceedings against Lucien de Rubempré in Paris, because the Civil Tribunal of the Seine had by its judgment decreed that they should be borne by Métivier. This contention, being adopted by the court, was embodied in a decree confirming the judgment entered against Séchard Fils by the Tribunal of Commerce at Angoulême, less the sum of six hundred francs on account of the costs at Paris to be borne by Métivier, and with some modifications of the costs as between the parties in view of the claim on which Séchard's appeal was based. This decree, of which notice was served on Séchard on August 17th, was translated on the 18th by an execution for the amount of the principal, interest and costs found due, followed by notice of levy on the 20th. At that point Petit-Claud intervened in the name of Madame Séchard and claimed the furniture as belonging to her, judgment for division of the property having been duly rendered. Furthermore, Petit-Claud brought Père Séchard into the case, the old man having become his client. This is how it came about:

On the day following his daughter-in-law's visit, the vinegrower came to Angoulême to see his solicitor, Maître Cachan, and ask his advice as to the

means of recovering his rent, considering that he was in danger of losing it in the fray in which his son was involved.

"I cannot look out for the father when I am prosecuting the son," said Cachan, "but go and see Petit-Claud, he is very clever and will serve you better perhaps than I could do."

At the Palais, Cachan said to Petit-Claud:

"I have sent Père Séchard to you; look out for him for me in return for what I am doing for you."

Between solicitors, favors of this sort are exchanged in the provinces as well as in Paris.

On the day following that on which Père Séchard had confided his troubles to Petit-Claud, Cointet the Great called on his confederate.

"Try to teach Père Séchard a lesson!" said he. "He's not the man ever to forgive his son for costing him a thousand francs; and that loss will wither every generous thought in his heart, if one should ever spring up there!"

"Go back to your vines," said Petit-Claud to his new client; "your son's unlucky, don't eat him out of house and home. I'll send for you when the time comes."

Thereupon, Petit-Claud claimed in the name of Séchard Père, that the presses, being fastened to the floor, were a part of the realty, especially as the house had been used as a printing-office since the reign of Louis XIV. Cachan,—waxing wroth in Métivier's behalf, who, after Lucien's furniture in

Paris had been proved to belong to Coralie, found that David's at Angoulême was claimed by his wife and his father—there were some very pretty things said at the hearing,—summoned father and son together, in order to put an end to such claims in short measure. "We propose," he cried, "to unmask the frauds of these men who display most extraordinary resources in the way of bad faith; who turn the most innocent and clearest articles of the Code into defensive works bristling with *chevaux-de-frise!* to defend themselves from what? from paying three thousand francs! obtained where? from poor Métivier's money-drawer! And people dare accuse brokers of bad faith! What times are these we live in? I ask you, is any man not free to take his neighbor's money? You will not sanction a claim which carries immorality to the very heart of justice!" The Angoulême magistrates, moved by Cachan's eloquent argument, rendered a judgment dealing with the claims of all the parties, awarding the furniture of the house alone to Madame Séchard, dismissing the claim of Séchard Père and ordering him to pay the costs, amounting to four hundred and thirty-four francs, sixty-five centimes.

"Père Séchard is safe," said the solicitors laughingly, to one another; "he wanted to have his hand in the pie, let him pay the bill!"

On August 26th, notice of the judgment was served, so that the presses and other appurtenances of the printing-office might be taken in execution

the 28th. The placards were posted! On application, permission was granted to sell the property on the premises. Notices of the sale were inserted in the newspapers, and Doublon flattered himself that he could proceed with the verification of the inventory and the sale on the 2d of September. At that moment David Séchard owed Métivier, upon a judgment in proper form and execution lawfully issued thereon, the total sum of five thousand two hundred seventy-five francs, twenty-five centimes, not including interest. He owed Petit-Claud twelve hundred francs and his fees, the amount of which was left to his generosity, following the noble custom of cab-drivers who have driven you at a good round pace. Madame Séchard owed Petit-Claud about three hundred and fifty francs and his fees. Père Séchard owed him his four hundred and thirty-four francs, sixty-five centimes, and Petit-Claud demanded three hundred francs from him for fees. Thus the whole amounted to something like ten thousand francs.

Aside from the usefulness of these documents to foreign nations, who can watch therein the judicial artillery at work in France, it is most essential that the legislator, assuming that the legislator has time to read, should know to what point the abuse of the rules of procedure may be carried. Should not some one forthwith propose a little law which should forbid solicitors, in certain cases, to run up bills of costs exceeding in amount the debt upon which suit is brought? Is there not something ab-

surd in subjecting a field of the hundredth part of an acre to the same formalities that must be observed in dealing with an estate worth a million? The reader will understand from this very bold statement of all the phases of the contest, the full meaning of the words: *formality, justice, costs!* of which the vast majority of Frenchmen have no suspicion. This is what is called, in legal slang, setting fire to a man's business. The type in the printing-office, weighing about five thousand pounds, were worth, at the cost of casting, two thousand francs. The three presses were worth six hundred francs. The rest of the stock would have been sold as old wood and iron. The household furniture would have produced at most a thousand francs. Thus Cachan and Petit-Claud had used property belonging to David Séchard representing a value of about four thousand francs, as a pretext for piling up costs to the amount of seven thousand francs, to say nothing of the future, whose buds gave promise of a fine crop of fruit, as we shall see. Most assuredly the bar of France and Navarre, yea, even of Normandy itself, will accord their esteem and admiration to Petit-Claud; but will not men of heart shed a tear of sympathy for Kolb and Marion?

During this war, Kolb sat on a chair at the hall door, when David did not need his assistance, performing the functions of a watch-dog. He received all the legal documents, and was watched constantly by one of Petit-Claud's clerks. When placards announcing the sale of the stock and machinery of the

printing-office were posted at the door, Kolb instantly tore them down and ran about the town tearing them down, crying:

"Ze rasgals! dorment such ein gut man! und dey gall dis choostice!"

Marion earned ten sous in the morning, turning a machine in a paper-mill, and used it for the daily expenses of the household. Madame Chardon had gone back without a murmur to the fatiguing nightwork of the nurse's profession, and brought her wages to her daughter at the end of each week. She had already made two *neuvaines* and was amazed that God was deaf to her prayers and blind to the pure light of the tapers she burned.

On the 2d of September, Ève received from her brother the only letter he wrote after that in which he told his brother-in-law of the negotiation of the three notes, the letter David concealed from his wife.

"This is the third letter I have had from him since he went away!" said the poor sister, hesitating about unsealing the fatal paper.

At that moment she was feeding her child; she was bringing him up on the bottle, for she had been compelled to dismiss the nurse for economical reasons. Judge of the frame of mind in which the reading of the following letter left her and David, whom she waked from a sound sleep. The inventor had gone to bed about daybreak, after passing the night over his paper-making.

"Paris, August 29th.

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"Two days ago, at five o'clock in the morning, I listened to the last sigh of one of the loveliest of God's creatures, the only woman who could love me as you love me, as David and my mother love me, and who gave me, in addition to that disinterested affection, what a mother and sister could never give: all the felicities of love! After sacrificing everything for me, it may be that poor Coralie died for me! for me who have not at this moment the means with which to bury her. She would have consoled me for having to live; only you, my dear angels, can console me for her death. The innocent creature obtained God's forgiveness, I believe, for she died a Christian death. Oh! Paris!—My own Eve, Paris is at the same time the glory and the shame of France; I have lost many illusions here, and I shall lose many more, begging for the little money I need to lay the body of an angel in holy ground!

"Your unhappy brother,

"LUCIEN."

"P. S.—I must have caused you much grief by my inconsiderate conduct, you will know all some day and you will forgive me. At all events, you need have no uneasiness: when he saw how distressed Coralie and I were, a worthy tradesman, whom I had wounded cruelly, Monsieur Camusot, undertook to settle the affair."

"The letter is still wet with his tears," she said to David, looking at him with such a pitying expression that something of her old affection for Lucien shone in her eyes.

"Poor boy, he must have suffered terribly, if she loved him as he says," cried the happy husband.

And they both alike forgot all their sorrows in the

presence of that supreme sorrow. At that moment Marion rushed into the room, crying:

"Here they are, madame! here they are!"

"Who?"

"Doublon and his men, the devil! Kolb is fighting with them, they're going to sell!"

"No, no, they won't sell, never fear!" cried Petit-Claud's voice in the room adjoining the bedroom; "I have just given notice of an appeal. We mustn't submit to a judgment that charges us with bad faith. I didn't expect to have to defend myself in this matter. To gain time for you, I let Cachan talk on; I am certain of another victory at Poitiers."

"But how much will the victory cost?" inquired Madame Séchard.

"My fees if we win, a thousand francs if we lose."

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried poor Eve, "isn't the remedy worse than the disease?"

When he heard that cry of innocence enlightened by contact with judicial fire, Petit-Claud stood abashed, Ève seemed so lovely to him. At this juncture Père Séchard arrived, summoned by Petit-Claud. The old man's presence in his children's bedroom, where his grandson lay in his cradle smiling at misfortune, made the scene complete.

"Papa Séchard," said the young solicitor, "you owe me seven hundred francs for intervening in your behalf: but you will recover it from your son by adding it to the lump sum of rent due you."

The old vinegrower noticed the cutting irony in

Petit-Claud's tone and manner as he addressed him.

"It would have cost you less to indorse for your son!" said Ève, leaving the cradle to go and kiss the old man.

David, humiliated at the sight of the crowd that had collected in front of his house, attracted by the struggle between Kolb and Doublon's men, held out his hand to his father, without bidding him good-morning.

"How can I owe you seven hundred francs?" the old man asked Petit-Claud.

"Why, in the first place, because I looked out for your interests. As your rents were at stake, you are bound for the whole bill of costs equally with your debtor, so far as I am concerned. If your son doesn't pay me the costs, you will pay them.—But that's a mere trifle; in a few hours they will try to put David in prison; will you let him go there?"

"What does he owe?"

"Oh! something like five or six thousand francs, not including what he owes you and what he owes his wife."

The old man, all suspicion, looked at the touching picture presented to his gaze in that blue and white chamber: a lovely woman in tears, beside a cradle, David bending at last beneath the burden of his misfortunes, and the solicitor, who had perhaps lured him thither as into a trap; the bear believed that his paternity was being played upon by them, he was afraid of being fleeced. He went and fondled

the child, who put out his little hands to him. Amid all their trouble, the child received as much care as an English peer's, and he had on his head a little embroidered cap lined with pink.

"Eh! let David get out of the scrape as best he can; I think only of this little one," cried the old grandfather, "and his mother will agree with me. David knows so much, he ought to know how to pay his debts."

"I propose to translate your sentiments into good French," said the solicitor mockingly. "Look you, Papa Séchard, you're jealous of your son. Listen to the truth! you have put David in his present position by selling him your printing-office for three times what it was worth and ruining him in order to obtain that exorbitant price. Oh! don't shake your head; the paper sold to Cointet, of which you pocketed the entire price, was the only valuable asset in your business. You hate your son, not only because you have stripped him clean, but also because you have made him a man above your own level. You make a pretence of being prodigiously fond of your grandson to hide your entire absence of feeling for your son and daughter-in-law, who would cost you money *hic et nunc*, whereas your grandson needs your affection only *in extremis*. You love that little fellow in order to make it appear that you love some member of your family and to avoid being charged with lack of feeling. That's the secret of your conduct, Père Séchard."

"Did you send for me to listen to that?" de-

manded the old man in a threatening tone, looking from the solicitor to his daughter-in-law and from her to his son:

"Why, monsieur," cried poor Ève to Petit-Claud, "have you sworn to ruin us? My husband never complained of his father."

The old fellow looked at her with a cunning leer.

"He has told me a hundred times that you loved him in your way," she said, understanding his suspicion.

Acting upon the instructions of Cointet the *Great*, Petit-Claud had made the breach between father and son irreparable, so that the father should not extricate David from his sad plight.

"On the day we have David safe in prison," Cointet had said to the solicitor the night before, "you shall be presented to Madame de Senonches."

The intelligence love gives had enlightened Madame Séchard; she fathomed this manufactured hostility as she had already fathomed Cérizet's treachery. Everyone will readily conceive the bewilderment of David, who could not understand Petit-Claud's familiarity with his father and his affairs. The straightforward printer had no idea of his attorney's connection with the Cointets, nor indeed did he know that the Cointets were masquerading in Métivier's skin. David's silence seemed an insult to the old vinegrower, and the solicitor took advantage of his client's astonishment to leave the room.

"Adieu, my dear David; you are warned, the

order of arrest cannot be suspended by the appeal; that is the only resource your creditors have left, and they propose to take it. So, save yourself!—Or rather, if you take my advice, you will go and see Cointet Frères; they have capital, and if you have discovered your secret, if it equals its promises, take them into partnership; they're very good fellows after all."

"What secret?" demanded Père Séchard.

"Why, do you suppose your son is fool enough to have abandoned his printing-office if he had nothing else to think about?" cried the solicitor. "He is in a fair way, he tells me, to find a way of making for three francs, a ream of paper that now costs ten francs."

"Still another way of cheating me!" cried Père Séchard. "You are all in league here like pickpockets at a fair. If David has found that, he doesn't need me, he's a millionaire! Adieu, my young friends, good-evening."

And the old man started down the stairs.

"Think about concealing yourself," said Petit-Claud to David, and he ran after old Séchard to exasperate him still more.

The little solicitor found the old man grumbling to himself on Place du Mûrier, walked with him down to L'Houmeau, and as he left him, threatened to take out execution for the costs due him if they were not paid within the week.

"I'll pay you if you'll show me a way to disinherit my son without injuring my daughter-in-law

and grandson!" said old Séchard, taking leave of Petit-Claud abruptly.

"How well Cointet the Great knows the people he has to deal with!—Ah! he was quite right in saying that that seven hundred francs would prevent the father's paying the seven thousand francs for his son," exclaimed the solicitor as he went up the hill to Angoulême. "Nevertheless, we mustn't let that old fox of a paper manufacturer get the best of us; it's time to ask him for something besides words."

"Well, David, my love, what do you intend to do?" Eve asked her husband when Père Séchard and the solicitor had left them.

"Put your largest kettle on the fire, my child," said David to Marion. "I have what I want at last!"

Upon hearing those words, Ève put on her hat and shawl and shoes with feverish haste.

"Dress, my friend," she said to Kolb, "and come with me, for I must find out if there is any way out of this hell."

"Monsieur," cried Marion, when Ève had gone, "be reasonable or madame will die of sorrow. Earn money enough to pay what you owe, and then you can hunt for your treasures at your ease."

"Hush, Marion," David replied; "the last obstacle will be overcome. I shall have a patent for the invention and a patent for improvements at the same time."

The plague of inventors in France is the patent for improvements. A man passes ten years of his life trying to discover some industrial secret, a machine, anything you choose; he takes out a

patent and believes himself to be master of his invention; he is followed by a rival, who, if he has not provided against every contingency, improves his invention by putting in an additional screw, and in that way, takes it out of his hands. Now the mere invention of a pulp from which paper could be made at a low price was not all that was necessary! Others might improve the process. David Séchard determined to provide against everything, so that he might not see a fortune, fought for amid so many cares and anxieties, snatched from his hands. Holland paper—that name is still given to paper made entirely of linen rags, although Holland no longer makes it—is slightly sized; but the sizing is done leaf by leaf and by hand, which adds to the cost of the paper. If it should be possible to size the paper in the vat, and by using an inexpensive sizing,—as is done to-day, but imperfectly still—there would be no possible improvement to patent. For the past month therefore David had been trying to size his pulp in the vat. He was after two secrets at once.

Ève went to see her mother. By a lucky chance, Madame Chardon was nursing the wife of the first deputy procureur-general, who had just presented the family of Milaud de Nevers with an heir-apparent. Ève, who was suspicious of all government officials, had conceived the plan of consulting the legal defender of widows and orphans as to her position, and of asking him if she could release David by binding herself, by selling her rights; but she hoped also to learn the truth concerning Petit-

Claud's ambiguous conduct. The magistrate, surprised by Madame Séchard's beauty, received her not only with the consideration due to her sex but with a species of courtesy to which she was not accustomed. The poor girl saw at last in the magistrate's eyes the expression she had never, since her marriage, seen in any eyes save Kolb's—an expression which is, to women as fair as Ève, the criterion by which they judge men. When passion or self-interest or advancing years deaden in a man's eyes the sparkle of absolute submission which glows in them in youth, a woman distrusts that man and begins to watch him. The Cointets, Petit-Claud, Cérizet, all the men in whom Eve had detected enemies, had looked at her with cold, dull eyes. She felt at ease therefore with the deputy, who, although he received her graciously, destroyed all her hopes in very few words.

"It is not certain, madame," he said, "that the Royal Court will reform the judgment that restricts to actual household furniture the release your husband executed to you of all he possessed in order to satisfy your claims. Your privilege should not avail to cover up a fraud. But, as you will be admitted as a creditor to share in the proceeds of the property seized, and as your father-in-law will also exercise his privilege for the amount of the rent due him, there will be, when the decree of the court is once entered, ground for further litigation in connection with what we call, in legal parlance, a *contribution*."

"Then Monsieur Petit-Claud will ruin us, will he not?" she cried.

"Petit-Claud's conduct," replied the magistrate, "is in accordance with the orders given him by your husband, who desires, so his solicitor says, to gain time. In my view, it would be better perhaps to abandon the appeal and for you and your father-in-law to purchase at the sale the articles most essential for carrying on the business, you to the limit of your claim, and he to the amount of his rent. But that would be moving too swiftly to the goal. The solicitors are devouring you!"

"In that case I should be in the hands of Monsieur Séchard Père, to whom I should owe rent for the machinery and for the house; my husband would still be subject to the suit of Monsieur Métivier, who would have had almost nothing?"

"Yes, madame."

"Then our position would be worse than it is now."

"The power of the law, madame, is given definitively to the creditor. You have received three thousand francs, you must repay them."

"Oh! monsieur, do you think us capable of—"

She checked herself, realizing the danger that her justification might bring upon her brother.

"Oh! I know," rejoined the magistrate, "that this affair is obscure both in regard to the debtors, who are upright, honorable, great, even! and in regard to the creditor, who is simply an agent."

Eve looked at the magistrate in a dazed, frightened way.

"You understand," said he, with a glance full of kindly shrewdness, "that during all the time that we sit listening to the arguments of counsel we reflect on what is taking place under our eyes."

Eve returned home in despair at her uselessness.

That evening at seven o'clock Doublon brought the document ordering him to seize the debtor's body. At that hour the prosecution reached its apogee.

"After to-morrow," said David, "I shall not be able to go out except at night."

Eve and Madame Chardon burst into tears. In their eyes, to hide was dishonorable. When they learned that their master's liberty was threatened, Kolb and Marion were the more alarmed because they had long since made up their minds that he was utterly without guile; and they trembled so for him that they went up to where he and Madame Chardon and Eve were sitting together, on the pretext of finding out if they could be of any service to them. They appeared while the three honest creatures, whose life hitherto had been so straightforward, were weeping over the necessity of concealing David. But how were they to elude the invisible spies, who, from that time forth, would keep watch upon his every movement, for he was unluckily the most absent-minded of men?

"*If matame gould vait ein leedle minute, I vill go und mage ein regonnoisanz in der enemy's gamp,*" said

Kolb, *"und you vill zee dat I know all apoud id, if I du loog lige ein Cherman; vor I am a dru Vrenchman, and am ub du a drick or du."*

"Oh! let him go, madame," said Marion, "he doesn't think of anything but protecting monsieur, he has no other idea. Kolb isn't an Alsatian; he's —what?—a regular Newfoundland dog!"

"Go, my good Kolb," said David, "we still have time to make up our minds to something."

Kolb hurried to the bailiff's house, where David's enemies, assembled in council, were discussing the best method of getting possession of him.

The arrest of debtors is, in the provinces, an outrageous, abnormal thing, if there ever was one. In the first place everybody knows everybody else too well ever to resort to such a hateful weapon. Creditors and debtors live side by side all their lives. Secondly, when a tradesman—a bankrupt, to use the provincial term, for there is little paltering in the provinces with that sort of legal robbery,—meditates a great failure, he takes refuge in Paris. Paris is in some sense the Belgium of the provinces: one can find there almost undiscoverable hiding-places, and the authority of the plaintiff's bailiff expires at the limits of his jurisdiction. Moreover, there are other obstacles, which tend to invalidate it. For instance, the law that declares the inviolability of domicile is in force everywhere in the provinces; the bailiff has not the right, as in Paris, to enter a third person's house to take the debtor. The legislature thought that Paris should be excepted because it so frequently happens

that several families occupy the same house. But, in the provinces, the bailiff must secure the presence of the justice of the peace in order to violate the domicile of the debtor himself. Now, the justice of the peace, who has absolute control over the bailiffs, is to all intent perfectly free to consent or decline to be present. It should be said to the credit of justices of the peace that this obligation of their office weighs upon them, they do not knowingly lend their aid to forward blind passions or schemes of revenge. There are other difficulties no less serious which tend to modify the absolutely useless harshness of the law with reference to arrests for debt, by the action of custom, which often affects the enforcement of laws to the point of nullifying them. In large cities there are enough miserable wretches, depraved creatures, faithless and lawless, to serve as spies; but in small towns people know one another too well to have any occasion to enter the employ of a bailiff. Whoever, however low his social standing, should sink to that sort of degradation, would be compelled to leave the town.

Thus the arrest of a debtor in the provinces, not being as in Paris or the other great centres of population the special privilege of the *gardes du commerce*, becomes an exceedingly difficult proceeding, a strategic contest between the debtor and the bailiff, whose ruses sometimes furnish very entertaining items for the newspapers. The elder Cointet did not choose to appear in the matter; but Cointet the Fat, who said he had been requested by

Métivier to look after his interests, had come to Doublon's house with Cérizet, now his proof-reader, whose coöperation had been purchased by the promise of a thousand-franc note. Doublon relied upon two of his assistants. Thus the Cointets already had three bloodhounds to watch their victim. Furthermore, when the arrest was to be made, Doublon could call on the gendarmerie, who, by the terms of the judgment, are bound to bear aid to the bailiff who requires it. These five persons then were together at that moment in Master Doublon's private room, on the ground floor of the house, adjoining the office.

The office was entered from a broad flagged corridor like a hall. The house had a plain, low door with gilt official scutcheons on each side, in the centre of which was the word: BAILIFF, in black letters. The two windows of the office were protected by strong iron bars. The private office looked on a garden where the bailiff, a lover of Pomona, cultivated fruit trees with great success. The kitchen was opposite the office, and behind the kitchen the stairs leading to the floor above. The house stood on a narrow street behind the new Palais de Justice, then in process of construction, which was not finished until after 1830. These details are necessary to an understanding of what happened to Kolb. The Alsatian had conceived the scheme of introducing himself to the bailiff on the pretext that he was willing to betray his master, in order to learn in that way what snares were being

laid for him and so be able to keep him from falling into them. The cook opened the door and Kolb expressed a desire to speak with Monsieur Doublon on business. Vexed at being disturbed while she was washing her dishes, the woman opened the office door, telling Kolb, whom she did not know, to wait there for monsieur, who was engaged in his private room at the moment; then she went and told her master that a man wanted to speak to him. The expression *a man* indicated so surely that the visitor was a peasant, that Doublon said:

"Let him wait!"

Kolb seated himself near the door of the private office.

"Well! how do you intend to proceed? for if we could get hold of him to-morrow morning, it would be so much time gained," said Cointet the Fat.

"He didn't steal his name of innocent," cried Cérizet, "nothing could be easier."

On recognizing Cointet's voice, and especially when he heard what he said, Kolb at once divined that he was talking about his master, and his amazement passed all bounds when he distinguished Cérizet's voice.

"A poy who has eaden his pret!" he said to himself in horror.

"My friends," said Doublon, "this is what we must do. We will station our men at long intervals from Rue de Beaulieu to Place du Mûrier, in every direction, so as to follow the innocent—I like that

name—without being seen by him; we won't leave him until he has entered the house where he expects to lie in hiding; we will leave him at peace a few days, then some fine day we'll meet him between sunrise and sunset."

"But what's he doing now? he may escape us," said Cointet the Fat.

"He's at home," said Master Doublon; "if he goes out I shall know it. I have one of my practitioners on guard on Place du Mûrier, another at the corner of the Palais, and another thirty paces from my house. If our man should go out they will whistle, and he won't have taken three steps before I know it by that method of telegraphing."

The bailiffs give their followers the respectable title of practitioners.

Kolb had not anticipated such good fortune; he left the room softly and said to the servant:

"*Monzire Touplon is very pizzy, I will gome again do-morrow morning early.*"

The Alsatian, being a good horseman, had been struck by an idea which he proceeded at once to put in execution. He ran to an acquaintance of his who kept horses for hire, selected one to his liking, ordered it saddled, and returned in hot haste to his master's house, where he found Ève in the depths of misery.

"What is it, Kolb?" asked the printer, remarking the Alsatian's manner, which was at once joyous and fearful.

"*You are zurrountet by rasgals. De zurest vay*

is do hite my master. Has matame tought apoud gonzealing monzire zomvare?"

When honest Kolb had described Cérizet's treachery, the lines of circumvallation drawn about the house and the part Cointet the Fat was taking in the matter and had told them of the ruses such men as they were planning against his master, a fatally bright light was thrown upon David's position.

"The Cointets are the ones who are persecuting you," cried poor Ève, in a tone of hopeless despair, "and that's why Métivier has been so hard. They are makers of paper, they are after your secret."

"But what can we do to escape them?" cried Madame Chardon.

"If matame has ein leedle blace to hite monzire," said Kolb, *"I bromise do dage him dere widoud any vun know noding apoud id."*

"Go only at night to Basine Clerget's," said Ève; "I will go and arrange everything with her. At such a time as this, Basine is another myself."

"The spies will follow you," said David at last, recovering some little presence of mind. "We must find some way to notify Basine without any one of us going there."

"Matame can go dere," said Kolb. *"My blan is lige zo: I go oud mit monzire und ve vill leet de visslers avay after uz. Meanvile, matame can go do Matemoizelle Clerchet, she vill nod pe vollowed. I have ein horse, I dake monzire pehint, und der teufel dake me if dey gatch us!"*

"Adieu, my dear," cried the poor girl, throwing

herself into her husband's arms; "none of us can come to see you, for it might lead to your being taken. We must say adieu for all the time that this voluntary imprisonment lasts. We will correspond by post; Basine will mail your letters and I will write you under cover to her."

When David and Kolb left the house they heard the spies whistling, and led them to Porte Palet, where the liveryman lived. There Kolb took his master *en croupe*, bidding him cling tight to him.

"*Vissle, vissle, mein gut vrends! I snap my vingers ad you all!*" cried Kolb. "*You von't gatch ein old gavalryman.*"

And the old cavalryman drove in his spurs and rode out into the country at a pace which made it impossible for the spies to follow them or to find out where they went.

Ève went to see Postel on the ingenious pretext of asking his advice. After submitting to the insults of the pity that is lavish of nothing but words, she left the druggist's, and was able to reach Basine's house unnoticed. She confided her troubles to her and asked her help and protection. Basine, who, for greater security, had taken Ève into her bedroom, opened the door of an adjoining closet, lighted by a tiny window and inaccessible to any eye. The two friends cleared out a little fireplace, the flue of which ran beside that of the fireplace in the workroom where the women kept a fire to heat their irons. They laid old blankets on the floor to deaden such sounds as David might accidentally make; they

put in a cot bed for him to sleep on, a stove for his experiments, a table to write at and a chair to sit on. Basine promised to take food to him at night; and, as no one ever entered her room, David could defy all his enemies, even the police.

"At last," said Ève as she kissed her friend, "he is safe."

Ève returned to Postel, for the purpose, as she said, of asking him to clear away some remaining doubt as to the question that had led her to call upon such a learned member of the Tribunal of Commerce, and she asked him to escort her home, listening all the way to his condolences.

"If you had married me, would you be where you now are?"

This sentiment was at the bottom of all the little druggist said. On his return he found his wife jealous of Madame Séchard's great beauty; and her rage at her husband's courtesy was only appeased by his reiterated opinion that short, red-haired women were far superior to tall dark women, who, he said, were like fine horses, always in the stable. He undoubtedly gave her some proofs of his sincerity, for the next day Madame Postel petted him.

"We can set our minds at rest," Ève said to her mother and Marion, whom she found, as Marion expressed it, still *all of a tremble*.

"Oh! they have gone," said Marion, as Ève glanced mechanically around her room.

"*Vitch vay shall ve go?*" asked Kolb when they had ridden a league on the Paris road.

"To Marsac," David replied; "as we have started in that direction, I will make one last attempt to move my father."

"I vould brever to addack a paddery of pig guns, pegause monzire your vater has no heard."

The old pressman did not believe in his son; he judged him as the common people judge, by results. In the first place, he did not think he had robbed him; in the second place, regardless of the difference in the times, he said to himself:

"I put him astride a printing-office, as I myself was put; and he, although he knew a thousand times more than I did, hasn't known how to ride!"

Incapable of understanding his son, he condemned him and assumed a sort of superiority over that lofty intelligence, saying to himself:

"I am keeping a crust of bread for him."

Moralists will never succeed in making people understand all the influence that the feelings exert upon men's selfish interests. It is quite as powerful as the influence of selfish interests upon the feelings. All the laws of nature produce two directly contrary results. David understood his father and had the sublime charity to make excuses for him. Reaching Marsac at eight o'clock, he and Kolb surprised the goodman just finishing his dinner, his hour for retiring being very close at hand.

"I owe your visit to the kindness of the authorities," said the father to his son with a bitter smile.

"How gan my master und you effer agree? He draffels among de glouds und you are always among

your vines!" cried Kolb, indignantly. "*Bay! bay! id's a vater's pizness.*"

"Come, Kolb, off with you; take the horse to Madame Courtois' so as not to trouble father with him, and understand that fathers are always right."

Kolb took his leave, growling like a dog who, when his master scolds him for his prudence, protests even while he obeys. Thereupon David, without disclosing his secret, offered to give his father the most conclusive proof of his discovery and suggested that he should accept an interest in it to the amount of such sums as should be required to set him free at once and to turn his discovery to account.

"What's that? how will you prove that you can make paper that costs nothing out of nothing?" asked the old printer, darting a vinous, but shrewd, inquisitive, greedy glance at his son.

You would have said it was a flash of lightning from a black cloud, for the old *bear*, faithful to his traditions, never went to bed without a nightcap. His nightcap consisted of two bottles of excellent old wine, which he *sipped*, to use his own words.

"Nothing simpler," said David. "I haven't any paper with me, for I came this way to escape Doublon; and finding that I was on the Marsac road, it occurred to me that I might perhaps find it as easy to deal with you as with a money-lender. I have nothing on me but my clothes. Shut me up in some safe place where no one can get at me, where no one can see me, and—"

"What!" said the old man, with a fierce glance at his son, "you won't let me see you at work?"

"Father," David rejoined, "you have proved to me that there's no such thing as a father in business."

"Ah! you distrust him who gave you your life?"

"No, but him who has deprived me of the means of living."

"Every one for himself, you're right!" said the old man. "Very well, I'll put you in my cellar."

"I'll go there with Kolb; you must give me a kettle to boil my pulp," said David, unmindful of the glance his father darted at him, "then you must go and gather some stalks of artichokes, asparagus and nettles, and some reeds, all of which you will find on the bank of your little stream. To-morrow morning I will come out of your cellar with some superb paper."

"If that's possible," cried the bear with a hiccough, "perhaps I'll give you—I'll see if I can give you—well, twenty-five thousand francs, on condition that I get as much out of it every year."

"Put me to the test, I agree!" cried David.—"Kolb, take the horse and ride to Mansle, buy a horsehair sieve at a hardware store, some glue at a grocer's and come back at full speed."

"Here, drink!" said the father, putting a bottle of wine and some bread and scraps of cold meat before his son. "Get up your strength while I go and

collect green rags for you; for your rags are green! indeed I'm afraid they'll be a little too green."

Two hours later, about eleven o'clock at night, the old man locked his son and Kolb into a small room adjoining his cellar, covered over with ridge tiles and containing all the utensils used in burning the wines of Angoumois, which, as every one knows, are the basis of all the so-called cognac brandies.

"Why, this is like being in a factory!" cried David, "there are pans and wood!"

"Well, I'll lock you in until to-morrow," said Père Séchard, "and I'll let my two dogs loose; then I shall be sure that no one brings you any paper. Show me some sheets to-morrow, and I promise to be your partner, then matters will be straightened out and well managed."

Kolb and David were locked in and passed about two hours in breaking and preparing the stalks, using two thick planks. The fire blazed, the water boiled. About two in the morning, Kolb, who was not so busily engaged as David, heard a sigh like a drunken man's hiccough; he took one of the two candles and began to look about on all sides, whereupon he perceived Père Séchard's bloated face filling a small square opening cut over the door leading into the cellar and concealed by empty barrels. The malevolent old fellow had taken his son and Kolb into the burning-room by the outer door, which was used for taking the casks out. The other inner door allowed the puncheons to be rolled from the

cellar into the burning-room without a journey through the yard.

"*Ah! baba, das is nod fair blay, you're drying to cheat your zon. Do you know was you are doing, ven you trink ein pottle of gut vine? You are making ein rasgal.*"

"Oh! father—" David began.

"I came to find out if you needed anything," said the vinegrower, somewhat sobered.

"*Und was id droo inderest vor us dat you haf prot ein leedle latter?*" said Kolb, opening the door after he had cleared a passage to it, and finding the old man in his shirt, mounted on a short ladder.

"You endanger your health!" cried David.

"I believe I walk in my sleep," said the old man shamefacedly, as he came down the ladder. "Your lack of confidence in your father made me dream; I dreamed that you had made a bargain with the devil to perform the impossible."

"*Der teufel, id is your bassion vor de leedle yellow-poys!*" cried Kolb.

"Go back to bed, father," said David; "lock us in, if you will, but spare yourself the trouble of coming back; Kolb will do sentry duty."

The next day, at four o'clock, David went out of the burning-room, having destroyed all traces of his operations, and exhibited to his father some thirty sheets of paper, which for fineness, whiteness, toughness and strength, left nothing to be desired, the watermark being formed by the marks of the threads of the sieve, some heavier than the others.

The old man took the specimens and put his tongue to them, like a *bear* accustomed from his youth to make his palate a test for paper; he handled them, rumpled them, folded them, subjected them to all the tests that typographers employ to ascertain the qualities of paper, and, although there was no fault to be found, he was unwilling to admit his defeat.

"We must see what will become of it under a press," he said, to avoid praising his son.

"*Tam rasgal!*" cried Kolb.

The old man, cold as a stone, concealed his pretended hesitation beneath his paternal dignity.

"I have no wish to deceive you, father; this paper, I think, will still cost too much, and I mean to solve the problem of sizing it in the vat. I have only that one thing more to do."

"Ah! you wanted to catch me!"

"If so, should I tell you? I can size it in the vat now, but so far I haven't succeeded in distributing the glue equally through the pulp, and the paper's as rough as a brush."

"Very well, perfect your process for sizing in the vat, and you shall have my money," said old Séchard.

"*My master vill neffer zee de golor of your money!*"

The old man evidently proposed to make David pay for the shame he had imbibed the night before, for he treated him more than coldly.

"Father," said David, after sending Kolb from the room, "I have never urged it against you that you valued your printing-office at an exorbitant

price and sold it to me at your own valuation. I have always remembered that you are my father; I have said to myself: 'Let us leave an old man, who has had a hard life and has certainly brought me up much better than I deserved, to enjoy the fruits of his toil in peace and in his own way.' I even gave up my mother's property to you and accepted without a murmur the debt-ridden life to which you condemned me. I promised myself that I would make a handsome fortune without annoying you. Well, I have found the secret, with my feet in the fire, with no bread in my house, harassed for debts that are not my own. Yes, I have struggled on patiently, until my strength is exhausted. It may be that you owe me your assistance!—but don't think of me, think of a suffering woman and a little child,"—here David could not restrain his tears—"and lend them your help and protection. Will you do less than Marion and Kolb, who gave me their savings?" he cried, seeing that his father remained as cold as the marble of a press.

"And isn't that enough for you?" cried the old man without the least shame; "why, you would eat up all France!—Good-day! I'm too ignorant to meddle in operations where I should be the only one operated on. The *monkey* shan't eat the *bear,*" he added, alluding to their pressroom titles. "I'm a vinegrower, not a banker. And then, you see, business between father and son's a bad thing. Let's have dinner, you can't say that I don't give you something!"

David was one of those great-hearted creatures who can force their suffering down into the depths of the heart so as to keep it secret from those who are dear to them; and so, when such a man's grief overflows, it is because his mightiest efforts are unavailing. Eve fully understood his noble character. But the father saw, in that great wave of grief forced from the bottom to the surface, the ordinary wail of children who seek *to catch their fathers* and he mistook his son's extreme dejection for the shame of failure. The father and son parted in anger. David and Kolb returned about midnight to Angoulême, entering the town on foot with as much precaution as thieves would have taken. About one o'clock in the morning, David was admitted, unseen by prying eyes, to Basine Clerget's house and taken to the impenetrable place of refuge prepared for him by his wife. In that asylum David was under the watchful eye of the most ingenious of all forms of sympathy, the sympathy of a *grisette*. The next morning, Kolb boasted of having assisted his master to escape on horseback, and said that he did not leave him until he had put him on board a trading boat that was to take him to the neighborhood of Limoges. A considerable supply of David's raw material was stored in Basine's cellar, so that neither Kolb, Marion, Madame Séchard nor her mother need have any intercourse with Mademoiselle Clerget.

Two days after the scene with his son, old Séchard, reflecting that it still lacked three weeks of

harvest time, went to stay with his daughter-in-law, drawn thither by his avarice. He could not sleep, so anxious was he to know if the discovery offered any chance of fortune, and he thought it well to go and watch the seed, to use his own expression. He took possession of one of the attics he had reserved for his own use, above his daughter-in-law's room, and lived there, closing his eyes to the destitute condition of his son's family. They owed him rent, surely they ought to board him! It did not seem strange to him that they used covers of tinned iron.

"I began that way," he said to his daughter-in-law, when she apologized for the absence of plate.

Marion was obliged to buy on credit everything that was consumed in the house. Kolb worked for a mason at twenty sous a day. Before long, poor Ève had but ten francs left, for she sacrificed her last resources to entertain the vinegrower as handsomely as possible, in her child's interest and David's. She did not lose hope that her little attentions, her respectful affection, her resignation would move the old miser; but she found him always insensible. At last, seeing that he had the cold eye of the Cointets, Cérizet and Petit-Claud, she tried to study his character and divine his intentions; but it was trouble thrown away! Père Séchard made himself impenetrable by being always in his cups. Drunkenness is a double veil. Under cover of his intoxication, which was as often feigned as real, the goodman tried to extort David's secrets from Ève. Sometimes he petted his daughter-in-law, sometimes

he frightened her. When Ève replied that she knew absolutely nothing, he would say:

"I'll drink up all my property. *I'll buy an annuity with it.*"

These degrading struggles exhausted the poor victim, who, in order not to show herself lacking in respect for her father-in-law, at last adopted a policy of silence. One day, tormented beyond endurance, she said to him:

"But, father, there is a very simple way of getting all you want: pay David's debts, then he will come back and you and he can come to terms."

"Ah! that's all you want of me!" he cried, "that's a good thing to know."

Père Séchard, who did not trust his son, did trust the Cointets. When he went to ask their advice, they purposely dazzled him by telling him that millions were involved in his son's investigations.

"If David can prove that he has been successful, I shall not hesitate to go into partnership with him and put in my paper mill, crediting him with his discovery at the same figure," said Cointet the Great.

The suspicious old man gleaned so much information drinking *petits verres* with the workmen, he questioned Petit-Claud to such good purpose, feigning imbecility, that he ended by suspecting the Cointets of hiding behind Métivier; he attributed to them the plan of ruining the Séchard establishment and inducing him to pay their debt by baiting him with the invention, for the old man of the people was incapable of suspecting Petit-Claud's com-

plicity, or of divining the carefully concocted plot to gain possession sooner or later of that precious industrial secret. At last, the old man, enraged at his failure to overcome his daughter-in-law's obstinate silence or even to find out from her where David was in hiding, determined to force open the door of the room used for casting rolls, having learned that his son made his experiments there. He went down early in the morning and began to work at the lock.

"Well, well, what are you doing there, Papa Séchard?" cried Marion, who rose at daybreak to go to her work; and she ran to where he stood.

"Ain't I in my own house, Marion?" said the goodman, abashed at being discovered.

"Aha! are you getting to be a thief in your old days? But you haven't had your breakfast yet. I'm going to tell madame this minute."

"Hush, Marion," said the old man, taking two six-franc pieces from his pocket. "Here."

"I'll hold my tongue, but don't come here again!" said Marion, shaking her finger at him, "or I'll tell all Angoulême."

As soon as the old man had gone out, Marion went up to her mistress's room.

"Here, madame, I wormed twelve francs out of your father-in-law; here they are."

"How did you do it?"

"Wasn't he trying to get a look at monsieur's pans and stuff, one way of discovering the secret? I knew well enough that there wasn't anything in the little kitchen; but I frightened him as if he was

going to rob his son, and he gave me twelve francs to hold my tongue."

At that moment Basine arrived, the joyous bearer of a letter from David to her friend, written on superb paper, and she handed it to her secretly.

"MY BELOVED EVE,

"I write to you first of all on the first sheet of paper made by my process. I have succeeded in solving the problem of sizing in the vat! The pulp costs five sous a pound, even assuming the necessity of special cultivation in fertile soil of the materials I use. Thus the ream of twelve pounds will cost three francs for pulp all sized. I am certain of reducing the weight of books at least one-half. The envelope, the letter and the specimens were made at different times. I embrace you; we are happy now in fortune, the only thing we lacked."

"Here," said Ève to her father-in-law, handing him the specimens, "give your son the value of your harvest and let him make his fortune; he will repay you ten times over, for he has succeeded!"

Père Séchard hurried away to the Cointets. There, each specimen was tested and minutely examined: some were sized, others without sizing; they were labeled from three francs to ten francs a ream; some were of metallic smoothness, others as soft as Chinese paper, and they were of every possible shade of white. The eyes of a Jew examining diamonds would not have been keener and more sparkling than the Cointets' and old Séchard's.

"Your son is well on the way," said Cointet the Fat.

"Very good, pay his debts," said the old pressman.

"Willingly, if he will take us into partnership," replied Cointet the Great.

"You're highwaymen!" cried the retired bear, "you prosecute my son under Métivier's name, and you want me to pay you, that's the whole of it. Not so green, bourgeois!"

The brothers looked at each other, but they were able to restrain the surprise that the old miser's perspicacity caused them.

"We aren't rich enough yet to amuse ourselves discounting paper," retorted Cointet the Fat; "we should think ourselves very lucky if we could pay cash for paper, we have to give notes for our supplies."

"We must experiment on a large scale," observed Cointet the Great, coldly, "for a thing that succeeds in a saucepan may fail when you undertake to produce it in large quantities. Set your son free."

"Very good, but will my son take me into partnership when he is free?" queried old Séchard.

"That doesn't concern us," said Cointet the Fat. "Do you imagine, my man, that when you've given your son ten thousand francs, that will be the end of it? A patent costs two thousand francs, and there will be journeys to Paris; and then, before you begin to make advances, it will be wise, as my brother says, to manufacture a thousand reams, to experiment with full vats, so as to

know just what to expect. You see, there's nobody a man should be so suspicious of as an inventor."

"For my part," said Cointet the Great, "I like my bread all cooked."

The old man passed the night ruminating over this dilemma:

"If I pay David's debts, he is free, and when he's once free he's not bound to give me a share in his invention. He knows well how I tricked him in the matter of our first partnership, and he wouldn't want to form another. So it would be to my interest to keep him in prison, the rascal."

The Cointets knew Père Séchard well enough to feel sure that they would hunt in company. Thus the three men, Cointet, old Séchard and Petit-Claud, reasoned thus:

"To form a partnership based on the secret invention, experiments must be made and to make such experiments, David must be free. But David, if set free, will escape us."

Each of them, moreover, had a secret motive for his action. Petit-Claud said to himself:

"After my marriage I shall be ready for anything the Cointets want me to do; but until then, I have them in my power."

Cointet the Great said to himself:

"I should prefer to have David under lock and key, then I should have things my own way."

Old Séchard said to himself:

"If I pay David's debts, he'll just thank me."

Eve, constantly attacked by the vinegrower and threatened with being turned out of the house, refused to reveal her husband's hiding-place or even to suggest to him that he should accept a safe-conduct. She was not certain that she could succeed so well in hiding him a second time as the first, so she replied simply:

"Pay your son's debts and you shall know everything."

No one of the four interested parties, who were, so to speak, sitting about a well-laden table, dared touch the delicacies, they were so afraid of being premature; and they all watched one another suspiciously.

Some few days after Séchard's disappearance, Petit-Claud called upon Cointet the Great at his paper-mill.

"I have done my best," he said; "David has voluntarily shut himself up in a prison that is unknown to us, and there he is working in peace at some improvement of his invention. If you haven't gained your object, it's not my fault; will you keep your promise?"

"Yes, if we succeed," was Cointet's reply. "Père Séchard has been here some days, and he has been questioning us about the manufacture of paper; the old miser has got scent of his son's invention and means to make the most of it, so there's some hope of arranging a partnership: you are the solicitor of father and son"—

"—May the *Holy Ghost* give them into our hands," interposed Petit-Claud with a smile.

"Yes," said Cointet. "If you succeed either in putting David in prison or in putting him in our hands by articles of partnership, you shall be Mademoiselle Françoise de la Haye's husband."

"Is that your *ultimatum?*" said Petit-Claud.

"Yes!" replied Cointet, "as we're speaking foreign languages."

"Well, here is mine in good French," retorted Petit-Claud dryly.

"Ah! let us hear it," said Cointet with an interested expression.

"Present me to Madame Senonches to-morrow, see that I have something positive to depend upon, in short, keep your promise, or I will pay Séchard's debt, sell my office and go into partnership with him. I don't propose to be gulled. You have spoken to me frankly, I speak to you in the same way. I have proved my sincerity, prove yours. You have everything, I have nothing. If I obtain no pledges of your sincerity, I'll take the game out of your hands."

Cointet the Great took his hat and umbrella, assumed his jesuitical air and went out, bidding Petit-Claud follow him.

"You shall see, my dear friend, if I haven't prepared the ground for you!" said the man of business to the solicitor.

The shrewd and crafty paper manufacturer had grasped the dangers of his position at a glance, and he saw that Petit-Claud was one of the men with whom one must play an open game. Already, in order to be ready for emergencies and to satisfy his conscience, he had said a few words in the ex-consul general's ear, on the pretext of giving him a statement of Mademoiselle de la Haye's financial condition.

"I have my eye on a husband for Françoise," he said, smiling, "for a girl with a marriage portion of thirty thousand francs should not be hard to please."

"We will talk about it again," Francis du Hautoy had made answer. "Since Madame de Bargeton's departure, Madame de Senonches' position has changed materially; we can marry Françoise to some rich old country gentleman."

"And she will behave badly," said Cointet, assuming his frigid manner. "Eh! marry her to a capable, energetic young man, whom you can take under your wing, and who will give his wife a good position."

"We will see," said Francis; "the godmother must be consulted first of all."

When Monsieur de Bargeton died, Louise de Nègrepelisse ordered the mansion on Rue du Minage to be sold. Madame de Senonches, who considered that her own abode was not appropriate to her station, induced Monsieur de Senonches to purchase the Bargeton house, the cradle of Lucien's ambition, in which this scene opened. Zéphirine de Senonches had made up her mind to succeed Madame de Bargeton in the species of royal power she had enjoyed, to have a salon, in a word, to play the great lady. There had been a feud in the first society of Angoulême, after Monsieur de Bargeton's duel with Monsieur de Chandour, between those who maintained the innocence of Louise de Nègrepelisse and those who believed the slanders of Stanislas de Chandour. Madame de Senonches de-

clared for the Bargetons and won over all the members of that faction first of all. Then, when she was installed in her fine house, she profited by the reluctance of many people who had played cards there so many years to change their confirmed habits. She received every evening and won a decided victory over Amélie de Chandour, who posed as her antagonist. The hopes of Francis du Hautoy, who found himself at the very heart of Angoulême society, reached as far as a possible marriage between Françoise and old Monsieur de Séverac, whom Madame du Brossard had failed to capture for her daughter. The return of Madame de Bargeton as wife of the Prefect of Angoulême augmented Zéphirine's pretensions for her beloved goddaughter. She said to herself that Comtesse Sixte du Châtelet would use her influence in her behalf as she had constituted herself her champion.

The paper manufacturer who knew his Angoulême through and through, appreciated all these obstacles at a glance; but he determined to extricate himself from his difficult predicament by one of those audacious strokes that Tartuffe alone would have attempted. The little solicitor, much surprised by the loyalty of his partner in rascality, left him to his thoughts as they walked from the paper-mill to the house on Rue du Minage where they were stopped on the landing by these words:

"Monsieur and madame are at breakfast."

"Announce us all the same," replied Cointet the Great.

And his name having procured their immediate admission, the pious tradesman presented the attorney to the precious Zéphirine, who was breakfasting with Monsieur du Hautoy and Mademoiselle de la Haye. Monsieur de Senonches had gone, as usual, to open the hunting season on Monsieur de Pimentel's preserves.

"This, madame, is the young solicitor-advocate I mentioned, who will arrange matters for the coming of age of your fair ward."

The former diplomatist scrutinized Petit-Claud, who, in his turn, cast sidelong glances at the *fair ward*. As for Zéphirine, to whom neither Cointet nor Francis had ever said a word, her surprise was so great that her fork fell from her hands. Mademoiselle de la Haye, a sort of speckled magpie with a sour face, straw-colored hair and a thin, ungraceful figure, was, despite her aristocratic manner, an exceedingly difficult subject to provide with a husband. The words: *Father and mother unknown*, in her certificate of birth, really shut her out from the sphere in which the affection of her godmother and Francis sought to place her. Mademoiselle de la Haye, being unacquainted with her position, was very exacting; she would have rejected the richest tradesman in all L'Houmeau. The significant grimace called forth from Mademoiselle de la Haye by the aspect of the little solicitor, was reflected upon Petit-Claud's lips. Madame de Senonches and Francis seemed to be consulting as to the best method of dismissing Cointet and his protégé.

Cointet, who saw through everything, requested Monsieur du Hautoy to grant him a brief interview, and went with the diplomat into the salon.

"Monsieur," he said abruptly, "your paternal affection makes you blind. You will find it hard work to marry your daughter; and in the interest of you all, I have made it impossible for you to draw back; for I love Françoise as one loves a ward. Petit-Claud knows all!—His excessive ambition is your security for your dear child's happiness. In the first place, Françoise can do with her husband whatever she chooses; but you, with the assistance of the new prefect's wife, can make him king's attorney. Monsieur Milaud is certainly appointed at Nevers. Petit-Claud will sell his business, you can easily procure the place of second deputy attorney for him and he will soon be king's attorney, then president of the tribunal and deputy."

When they returned to the dining-room, Francis was most gracious to the aspirant for his daughter's hand. He looked at Madame Senonches in a meaning way and brought the visit of introduction to a close by inviting Petit-Claud to dinner the next day, to talk business. Then he escorted the tradesman and the solicitor as far as the courtyard, saying to Petit-Claud that, upon Cointet's recommendation, he was disposed, as was Madame de Senonches, to confirm whatever plans the guardian of Mademoiselle de la Haye's fortune might have formed for that little angel's happiness."

"Oh! how ugly she is!" cried Petit-Claud. "I am caught!"

"She has an air of distinction," replied Cointet; "but would they give her to you if she were beautiful?—Ah! my dear fellow, there's more than one small landholder who would be very glad of thirty thousand francs with the protection of Madame de Senonches and the Comtesse du Châtelet; especially as Monsieur Francis du Hautoy will never marry and this girl is his heir. Your marriage is a settled thing!"

"How so?"

"This is what I have just said to him," said Cointet, describing his bold stroke to the solicitor. "My dear fellow, Monsieur Milaud, they say, is to be appointed king's attorney at Nevers: you must sell your office, and, in ten years, you will be Keeper of the Seals. You are enterprising enough not to recoil at any service that the court may require of you."

"Very well, be on Place du Mûrier at half-past-four to-morrow," rejoined the solicitor, carried away by the possibilities of his future; "I shall have seen Père Séchard, and we will fix up partnership articles by virtue of which the father and son will belong to the *holy spirit* of the Cointets."

When the old curé of Marsac climbed up to Angoulême to inform Ève of her brother's plight, David had been in hiding for eleven days, two doors away from the one the worthy priest had just left.

When Abbé Marron came out upon Place du

Mûrier he found three men there, each remarkable in his way, who were bearing down with all their weight on the present and the future of the poor voluntary prisoner: Père Séchard, Cointet the Great and the little hatchet-faced solicitor. Three men, three cupidities! but three cupidities as different from one another as the men themselves. One had conceived the idea of making his son an object of barter, another his client, and Cointet the Great consummated all this infamy, flattering himself that he would have nothing to pay. It was about five o'clock and most of the people who were on their way home to dinner stopped a moment to look at the three men.

"What the devil can old Père Séchard and Cointet the Great have to say to each other?" thought the most inquisitive.

"Doubtless they're discussing the affairs of that poor wretch who leaves his wife and child and mother-in-law without bread," said some.

"Oh! send your children to Paris to learn a trade!" said one patriotic provincial.

"Well, what are you doing here, Monsieur le Curé?" cried the vinegrower, spying Abbé Marron as soon as he entered the square.

"I have come on business that concerns your family," the old man replied.

"Another of my son's schemes!" said old Séchard.

"It would cost you very little to make everybody happy," said the priest, pointing to the win-

dow where Madame Séchard's lovely face appeared between the curtains.

At that moment Eve was tossing her child up and down and singing to him to stop his crying.

"Do you bring news of my son," said the father, "or what would be better still, money?"

"No," said Monsieur Marron, "I bring the sister news of her brother."

"Of Lucien?" cried Petit-Claud.

"Yes. The poor fellow came from Paris on foot. I found him at Courtois's, dying of fatigue and hunger," the priest replied. "Oh! he's in a wretched state!"

Petit-Claud saluted the priest and took Cointet's arm, saying aloud:

"We are to dine with Madame Senonches, it's time to go and dress!"

Two steps away, he whispered:

"When you have the child, you soon have the mother. We have David."

"I have married you, marry me," said Cointet the Great with a hypocritical smile.

"Lucien was a schoolmate of mine, we were bosom friends! In a week I shall know something about David. See that the banns are published and I'll undertake to land David in prison. My mission ends with the entry of his name on the register."

"Ah!" said Cointet, softly, "what a fine thing it would be to take out the patent in our name!"

At the last sentence the little hatchet-faced solicitor shuddered.

At that moment Père Séchard and Abbé Marron, the latter of whom had disentangled the judicial drama by a single word, entered Ève's room.

"Here, Madame Séchard," said the old bear, "here's our curé who evidently has some fine news to tell us of your brother."

"Oh!" cried poor Ève, with terror at her heart, "what more can have happened to him?"

Her exclamation betrayed such a burden of sorrow and apprehension in so many different directions, that Abbé Marron hastened to say:

"Let me set your mind at rest, madame, he is alive."

"Would you be kind enough, father," said Ève to the old vinegrower, "to go and call my mother: she must hear what monsieur has to tell us of Lucien."

The old man went to Madame Chardon and said:

"You will have to have a brush with Abbé Marron, who's a good man, *although a priest.* Dinner will be late, no doubt; I'll come back in an hour."

And the old man, insensible to everything that did not ring or shine like gold, left the old woman without waiting to see the effect of the blow he had dealt her. The misery hanging over her two children, the failure of the hopes she had founded upon Lucien, the unexpected change in a character which they had so long believed to be energetic and up-

right, in short, all the occurrences of the past eighteen months had changed Madame Chardon beyond recognition. She was not only of noble race, she had a noble heart and adored her children; therefore she had suffered more in the last six months than during all her previous years of widowhood. Lucien had had an opportunity to become a Rubempré by ordinance of the king, to revive that family, its titles and its coat of arms, to become great! And he had fallen into the mire. For she was more severe upon Lucien than his sister was, and had looked upon him as lost when she learned of the affair of the notes. Mothers sometimes choose to deceive themselves; but they always know the children they have nourished and have never left; and in the discussions between David and his wife concerning Lucien's chances in Paris, Madame Chardon, while apparently sharing Ève's illusions concerning her brother, trembled inwardly lest David should prove to be right, for he spoke as her conscience spoke. She was too well aware of her daughter's sensitiveness to venture to express her sorrows to her, so that she was compelled to devour them in silence, as only mothers can who truly love their children. Ève meanwhile noticed with alarm the ravages that grief was working in her mother, she watched her progressing from old age to decrepitude with never a halt! Thus the mother and the daughter were telling each other the noble falsehoods that do not deceive. The savage vine-grower's remark was the last drop that caused the

cup of the mother's affliction to overflow; she was stricken to the heart.

And so, when Eve said to the priest: "Monsieur, this is my mother!" and when he saw the face withered like an aged nun's, surrounded by perfectly white hair, but beautified by the calm and gentle expression of a woman piously resigned to her fate, who walked, as the saying is, in the will of God, he understood the life that the two poor creatures were leading. He no longer felt any compassion for their executioner, for Lucien, and he shuddered as he divined the torture undergone by his victims.

"Mother," said Ève, wiping her eyes, "my poor brother is very near us, he is at Marsac."

"And why not here?" asked Madame Chardon.

Abbé Marron repeated all that Lucien had told him of the misery of his last days at Paris and his sufferings on the journey. He described the poet's anguish when he learned the effects of his imprudence upon his family, and his apprehensions as to the reception that might await him at Angoulême.

"Has it occurred to him to doubt us?" said Madame Chardon.

"The unfortunate youth has come home to you on foot, undergoing the most terrible privations, and he returns disposed to enter upon the humblest walks of life—to atone for his errors."

"Monsieur," said the sister, "despite the wrong he has done us, I love my brother as one loves the body of one who is no more; and even to love him so is to love him more than many sisters love their

brothers. He has made us very poor; but let him come here and he shall share the meagre crust of bread that we still have, that he has left us, in fact. Ah! if he had not gone away, monsieur, we should not have lost our most precious treasures."

"And it was the woman who took him from us, whose carriage brought him back!" cried Madame Chardon. "He went away in Madame de Bargeton's calèche, sitting beside her, and returned stealing a ride behind!"

"In what way can I assist you in your present plight?" said the good curé, seeking some suitable remark with which to take leave of them.

"A money wound is not mortal, they say, monsieur," replied Madame Chardon; "but such wounds can have no other physician than the patient."

"If you had enough influence to persuade my father-in-law to assist his son, you would rescue a whole family," said Madame Séchard.

"He doesn't trust you and he seemed to me very bitter against his son," said the old man, who had been led by the vinegrower's diatribes to look upon David Séchard's affairs as a wasp's nest into which it was not safe to put one's hand.

His mission fulfilled, the priest went to dine with his grand-nephew Postel, who destroyed what little kindly feeling his old uncle entertained for David, by taking sides with the father against the son, like all Angoulême.

"There are ways of dealing with spendthrifts," concluded little Postel; "but with men who make experiments, anyone would ruin himself."

The curiosity of the curé of Marsac was fully satisfied, and that, in all the provinces of France, is the principal purpose of the excessive interest people take in one another's affairs. In the evening he told the poet all that had taken place at the Séchards', describing his expedition as a mission dictated by the purest charity.

"You have saddled a debt of ten to twelve thousand francs on your sister and brother-in-law," he said in conclusion, and no one, monsieur, has that trifling sum to lend to his neighbor. In Angoumois we are not rich. I thought that a much smaller amount was involved when you spoke of your notes."

Having thanked the old man for his kindness, the poet said:

"The word of forgiveness you bring me is in my eyes the real treasure."

The next morning Lucien started very early from Marsac for Angoulême, where he arrived about nine o'clock, cane in hand, dressed in a frockcoat rather the worse for his journey and black trousers worn white in spots. His well-worn boots were a sufficient indication that he belonged to the unfortunate class of pedestrians. He did not attempt to deceive himself as to the effect likely to be produced upon his fellow-townsmen by the contrast between his departure and his return. But his heart was still

throbbing in the grasp of the remorse inspired by the old priest's narrative, and he accepted that punishment for the moment, resolved to brave the glances of his former acquaintances. He said to himself:

"I am acting like a hero!"

All such poetic natures as his begin by making dupes of themselves. As he walked through L'Houmeau, there was a struggle in his mind between the shame of such a home-coming and the poesy of his memories. His heart beat fast as he passed Postel's house, where, luckily for him, Léonie Marron was alone in the shop with her child. He was pleased to see—for vanity was still strong within him—that his father's name had been effaced. Since his marriage, Postel had had the shop repainted and had placed over the door, as they do in Paris, the word PHARMACIE. As he climbed the steps to Porte Palet, Lucien felt the influence of his native air, the burden of his misfortunes no longer weighed upon him and he said to himself joyfully:

"I am going to see them once more!"

He reached Place du Mûrier without meeting anyone: a piece of good fortune for which he, who once walked the streets of his native town in triumph, hardly dared hope. Marion and Kolb, on guard at the door, rushed upstairs, crying:

"Here he is!"

Lucien saw the old courtyard and the old workroom, his mother and sister were on the stairs, and

they threw themselves into his arms, forgetting all their woes for an instant in that embrace. In the bosom of the family we almost always compromise with unhappiness; we make a bed for ourselves upon it and hope makes its hardness endurable. If Lucien presented the image of despair, he presented also its poetry: the sun on the highroads had bronzed his complexion; profound sadness, imprinted on his features, cast its shadow upon his poet's brow. This change in his appearance denoted such a world of suffering, that, at sight of the traces left upon his face by want, the only possible feeling was compassion. The imaginative creature who had gone from the bosom of his family, found sad realities there upon his return. Ève's face in her joy wore the smile of saints in their martyrdom. Grief gives sublimity to the features of a beautiful young woman. The gravity that had succeeded the expression of absolute innocence he had left upon his sister's face at the time of his departure for Paris, spoke so eloquently to Lucien that he could not fail to be painfully impressed by it. Thus the first effusion of feeling, ardent and natural as it was, was followed on both sides by a reaction: no one dared to speak. Lucien could not refrain, however, from looking about in search of him whose presence alone was lacking to make the reunion complete. That inquiring look, fully understood by Ève, made her burst into tears, and Lucien wept from sympathy. Madame Chardon meanwhile sat by with her pale face apparently unmoved. Ève rose, went down-

stairs to avoid saying harsh words to her brother, and said to Marion:

"My child, Lucien likes strawberries, we must find some for him."

"Oh! I knew you'd want to feast Monsieur Lucien. Never fear, you shall have a nice little breakfast and a good dinner too.

"Lucien," said Madame Chardon to her son, "you have much to repair here. You left us to become an object of pride to your family, and you have plunged us into misery. You have almost broken in your brother's hands the instrument of fortune, which he sought only for his new family. You have broken something more than that—" continued the mother.

There was a terrible pause, and Lucien's silence implied his acceptance of his mother's reproaches as well deserved.

"Begin a life of hard work," continued Madame Chardon gently, "I do not blame you for having tried to revive the noble family to which I belong; but for such undertakings, wealth is essential before all else, and a sentiment of pride: you had neither the one nor the other. You have substituted distrust for our confidence in you. You have destroyed the peace of this resigned, hard-working family, whose road was hard enough before. The first missteps should be forgiven. Do not repeat them. Our present circumstances are most distressing; be prudent and listen to your sister; misfortune is a teacher whose lessons, harshly taught, have borne

fruit in her: she has become a serious-minded woman, she is a mother, she carries the whole burden of the household through her devotion to our dear David; she has become, by your fault, my only comfort."

"You might be much more severe," said Lucien, embracing his mother. "I accept your forgiveness, because I shall never have occasion to ask it again."

Ève returned; from her brother's humiliated manner she understood that Madame Chardon had spoken. Her kind heart sent a smile to her lips, to which Lucien replied with suppressed tears. Presence has a sort of magic charm, it works a change in the most hostile feelings, between lovers as well as in families, however strong the motives of dissatisfaction. Does affection leave ruts in the heart into which one loves to fall again? Does the phenomenon belong to the science of magnetism? Is it the reason that says that we must never meet again or else we must forgive? Whether this effect is to be attributed to reason, to a physical cause or to the soul, everyone must have known instances where the glance, the manner, the acts of a loved one awake some vestiges of affection in those whom he has most grievously insulted, abused or afflicted. Although the mind may find it hard to forget, although one's material interests may continue to suffer, the heart resumes its servitude in spite of everything.

So it was that the poor sister, as she sat and listened until the breakfast hour to her brother's

confidences, could not control her eyes when she looked at him nor her voice when she allowed her heart to speak. As she came to understand the details of literary life in Paris, she understood why Lucien had gone to the wall in the struggle. The poet's delight in playing with his sister's child, his boyish exuberance, the happiness of seeing his native province and his dear ones once more, mingled with his profound grief that David was necessarily in hiding, the melancholy words that escaped him, his emotion when Marion produced the strawberries, showing that in all her distress his sister had remembered his liking for them: everything, even to the necessity of finding room for the prodigal brother and looking after him, combined to make that day a holiday. It was like a breathing space in their wretchedness. Père Séchard disturbed the flow of sentiment in the two women, saying:

"You make as much of him as if he brought you a fortune!"

"What has my brother done, pray, that we shouldn't make much of him?" cried Madame Séchard, eager to conceal Lucien's shame.

Nevertheless when the first outbursts of affection had spent their force, indications of the true state of affairs made themselves manifest. Lucien soon detected in Ève's manner the difference between her present affection for him and that which she had formerly felt. David was greatly honored, whereas Lucien was loved *in spite of everything*, as one loves a

mistress despite the calamities she causes. Esteem, the essential foundation of our sentiments, is the solid substance that gives them an indescribable quality of stability, of security upon which one lives, and which was absent between Madame Chardon and her son, between the brother and the sister. Lucien felt that they had not that perfect confidence in him that they would have had, had he not been found wanting in honor. D'Arthez's opinion of him, which his sister had adopted, could be divined in her gestures, her glance, the tone of her voice. Lucien was pitied! but as for being the glory, the pride of the family, the hero of the domestic fireside, all those fair hopes had vanished, never to return. They were so afraid of his heedlessness that they did not disclose David's hiding-place to him. Ève, insensible to the caresses that accompanied Lucien's questions, for he was anxious to see his brother, was no longer the Ève of L'Houmeau, to whom, in the old days, a glance from Lucien was an irresistible command. Lucien talked about undoing the evil he had done, boasting that he could save David. Ève replied:

"Don't meddle with the matter, our adversaries are the shrewdest and most cunning of men."

Lucien shook his head, as if he would have said: "I have fought with Parisians." His sister retorted with a glance that said: "You were beaten."

"They no longer love me," thought Lucien. "To please one's family, as well as the world, one must be successful."

After the second day, as he tried to explain the distrust of his mother and sister, the poet's mind was filled, not with rancor but with disappointment. He applied to the chaste provincial life the measure of life in Paris, forgetting that the long-suffering mediocrity of that household, sublime in its resignation, was his work.

"They are bourgeoises, they can't understand me," he said to himself, thus drawing a line between himself and his sister and mother and Séchard, whom he could no longer deceive either as to his character or his future prospects.

Ève and Madame Chardon, in whom the divinatory sense was fostered by so many blows and so much misery, fathomed Lucien's most secret thoughts, they felt that he judged them unfairly and they saw that he was holding himself aloof from them.

"Paris has made a great change in him!" they said to themselves.

However, they were reaping the fruit of the selfishness they had themselves cultivated. On both sides that leaven was certain to ferment, and ferment it did; but principally in Lucien, who felt how blameworthy he was. As for Eve, she was one of those sisters who can say to a sinning brother: "Forgive me *your* sins!" When two hearts have been perfectly united as Eve's and Lucien's were in their early life, any wound inflicted on that fair ideal of sentiment is fatal. Villains may be reconciled after exchanging dagger thrusts but lovers fall out

irrevocably at a glance or a word. In this thought of the quasi-perfection of the heart's life lies the secret of many inexplicable separations. One can live with distrust in one's heart, when the past does not present the picture of a pure and cloudless affection; but to two beings who have once been perfectly united, life becomes insupportable when the glance, the word demand precautions. That is why great poets make their Pauls and Virginias die in the bloom of youth. Can you conceive of Paul and Virginia at odds? Let us remark, to the credit of Ève and Lucien, that these wounds were not inflamed by their crushing pecuniary disasters: in the irreproachable sister as in the erring poet, all was sentiment; and the slightest misunderstanding, the most trivial dispute, a fresh misstep on Lucien's part might disunite them or cause one of the quarrels that irrevocably destroy the peace of families. In money matters everything can be arranged; but the sentiments are pitiless.

The next day Lucien received a copy of the Angoulême newspaper and turned pale with pleasure when he saw that he was the subject of one of the first leading articles which that respectable sheet ever ventured to print; for, like the provincial academies, like a well-bred girl, as Voltaire says, it never gave people any reason for talking about it.

"Let Franche-Comté boast of having given birth to Victor Hugo, Charles Nodier and Cuvier; Bretagne to Chateaubriand and Lamennais; Normandy to Casimir Delavigne; Touraine to the author of *Éloa;* to-day Angoulême, where

under Louis XIII. the illustrious Guez, better known by the name of Balzac, first saw the light, has no reason to envy the afore-named provinces or Limousin, which produced Dupuytren, or Auvergne, the native province of Montlosier, nor Bordeaux, which has had the good fortune to witness the birth of so many great men; we too have a poet! the author of some beautiful sonnets entitled *Les Marguerites* combines with the glory of the poet that of a master of prose, for we also owe to him the magnificent novel, *L'Archer de Charles IX.* Some day our posterity will be proud of having had for a compatriot Lucien Chardon, the rival of Petrarch ! ! ! "

In the provincial journals of those days, the exclamation points resembled the cheers with which the *speeches* are greeted at *meetings* in England.

" Notwithstanding his brilliant success in Paris, our young poet remembered that the Hôtel de Bargeton was the cradle of his triumphs, that the Angoumois aristocracy were the first to applaud his poems; that the present wife of Monsieur le Comte du Châtelet, prefect of our department, encouraged his first steps in the career of the Muses, and he has returned to our midst !—All L'Houmeau was stirred to its depths when our Lucien de Rubempré made his appearance there yesterday. The news of his return has produced the liveliest sensation on all sides. It is certain that Angoulême will not submit to be outdone by L'Houmeau in the honors that it is proposed to confer upon one who, both in the press and in literature, has so gloriously represented our city in Paris. Lucien, at once a religious poet and a royalist, defied the fury of parties; he has returned, it is said, to rest from the fatigues of a conflict which would exhaust athletes of much greater power of endurance than men of poetic, dreamy temperament.

" An eminently politic suggestion, which we applaud, and which Madame la Comtesse du Châtelet is said to have been the first to make, is that our great poet be given the title and

name of the illustrious family of De Rubempré, whose only heiress is Madame Chardon, his mother. To revive thus, by an infusion of fresh talent and fresh renown, old families on the point of dying out, is a new proof, by the illustrious author of the Charter, of his constant desire expressed by the words: *Union and oblivion.*

"Our poet alighted at the house of his sister, Madame Séchard."

Among the Angoulême items were the following:

"Our prefect, Monsieur le Comte du Châtelet, who had already been appointed gentleman-in-ordinary of His Majesty's bed-chamber, has now been made Councillor of State on special service.

"Yesterday all the government officials called upon Monsieur le Préfet.

"Madame la Comtesse Sixte du Châtelet will receive every Thursday.

"The mayor of Escarbas, Monsieur de Nègrepelisse, representing the younger branch of the D'Espards, Madame du Châtelet's father, recently created a count, peer of France and Commander of the royal order of Saint-Louis, has been selected, it is said, to preside over the electoral college of Angoulême at the approaching elections."

"Look," said Lucien to his sister, handing her the paper.

Having read the article attentively, Ève returned the sheet to Lucien with a pensive air.

"What do you say to that?" inquired Lucien, amazed at her reserve, which resembled coldness.

"My dear," she replied, "that paper belongs to the Cointets, they have absolute control of its contents and their hand can be forced only from the prefecture or the bishop's palace. Do you suppose

that your former rival, the present prefect, is generous enough to sing your praises thus? Do you forget that the Cointets are persecuting us under the cloak of Métivier's name, and desire beyond any question to induce David to give them a share in his inventions? Whatever the source of that article, it gives me a feeling of uneasiness. You aroused nothing but hatred and jealousy here; everybody slandered you, by virtue of the proverb: *No prophet is without honor save in his own country*, and now everything is changed in the twinkling of an eye!"

"You know nothing of the self-esteem of these provincial towns," replied Lucien. "Why in a little town in the South, the people crowded to the gates to receive in triumph a young man who had won the prize of honor in competition, looking upon him as a great man in embryo!"

"Listen to me, dear Lucien; I don't want to preach at you, so I will say all I have to say in a word: in this place, be suspicious of the smallest things."

"You are right," he replied, surprised to find his sister so unenthusiastic.

The poet was delighted beyond measure to see his inglorious and shameful return to Angoulême metamorphosed into a triumph.

"You don't believe in the morsel of glory that costs us so dear!" cried Lucien, after an hour's silence, during which something like a tempest had been gathering in his heart.

Ève's only reply was to look him in the face, and that look made him ashamed of the accusation.

A few moments after dinner, an office-boy from the prefecture brought a letter to Monsieur Lucien Chardon, which seemed to turn the scale in favor of the poet's vanity, for society was disputing possession of him with his family.

The letter proved to be the following invitation:

"Monsieur le Comte Sixte du Châtelet and Madame la Comtesse du Châtelet request Monsieur Lucien Chardon to do them the honor to dine with them on the 15th of September next.

"R. S. V. P."

With the invitation was this visiting card:

LE COMTE SIXTE DU CHÂTELET

Gentleman-in-ordinary of the King's bedchamber, Prefect of the Charente, Councillor of State.

"You're in favor," said Père Séchard, "people are talking about you in the town as a great personage. Angoulême and L'Houmeau are disputing over which shall twist wreaths for you."

"My dear Ève," said Lucien in his sister's ear, "I am in absolutely the same plight that I was in at L'Houmeau the day I was going to Madame de Bargeton's: I haven't any clothes to wear to the prefect's dinner party."

"You mean to accept the invitation?" cried Madame Séchard in dismay.

Thereupon a spirited discussion took place between the brother and sister on the question whether he should or should not go to the prefecture. The good sense of the provincial told Ève that a man should not show himself in society, save with a smiling face and irreproachable costume; but she concealed her real thoughts:

"Where will this dinner lead Lucien? What can Angoulême society do for him? Is there not some plot on foot against him?"

Lucien's last words to his sister before retiring for the night, were these:

"You don't know what influence I have! the prefect's wife is afraid of the journalist; moreover, there is still something of Louise de Nègrepelisse in the Comtesse du Châtelet! A woman who has obtained so many favors can save David! I'll tell her of the discovery my brother has made and it will be a mere trifle for her to obtain a grant of ten thousand francs from the ministry."

At eleven o'clock, Lucien, his mother and sister, Père Séchard, Marion and Kolb were all awakened by the town band, augmented by that of the garrison, and found the Place du Mûrier full of people. Lucien Chardon de Rubempré was receiving a serenade from the young men of Angoulême. Lucien stationed himself at his sister's window and said, after the first selection, amid the most profound silence:

"I thank my compatriots for the honor they confer upon me, I shall try to show myself worthy of

it; they will forgive me for saying nothing further; my emotion is so keen that I am unable to continue."

"Long live the author of *L'Archer de Charles IX.!* Long live the author of *Les Marguerites!* Long live Lucien de Rubempré!"

After these three salvos, shouted by a few voices only, wreaths and bouquets were skilfully thrown through the window into the room. Ten minutes later, the Place du Mûrier was empty, silence reigned once more.

"I would rather have ten thousand francs," observed old Séchard, turning the wreaths and bouquets over and over with a cunning expression. "But you gave them marguerites, so they give you bouquets. You run to flowers."

"That's all the value you place on the honors my fellow-citizens bestow upon me!" cried Lucien, whose face had lost the last trace of melancholy and beamed with satisfaction. "If you knew men, Papa Séchard, you would realize that two such moments do not occur in a lifetime. Triumphs like this can be due to nothing less than genuine enthusiasm!—This, my dear mother and my good sister, effaces many disappointments."

Lucien embraced his mother and sister as one embraces at those moments when joy overflows in such huge waves that one must needs divert the stream into a friend's heart.

"In default of a friend," said Bixiou one day, "an author intoxicated with success will embrace his male concierge."

"Well, my dear child," he said to Ève, "why do you weep? Ah! it is with joy."

"Alas!" said Ève to her mother before returning to her bed and when they were alone, "I believe that in a poet there is something of a pretty woman of the worst sort."

"You are right," her mother replied with a shake of the head. "Lucien has already forgotten everything, not only his own misfortunes, but ours."

The mother and daughter separated, afraid to tell each other all that was in their minds.

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In countries consumed by the spirit of social insubordination hidden under the word *equality*, every triumph is one of those miracles which do not happen, as certain miracles are said to have happened, without the coöperation of adroit mechanics. Out of ten ovations obtained by ten living men and bestowed upon them in the bosom of their native country, nine are due to causes entirely foreign to the celebrity honored. Was not Voltaire's triumph on the boards of the Théâtre-Français, the triumph of the philosophy of his time? In France, a man can win a triumph only because in celebrating it, each one places a wreath upon his own head. Therefore the two women were justified in their presentiments. The success of the provincial great man was too antipathetic to the stagnant habits of Angoulême not to have been brought upon the stage by somebody's selfish interest or by some enthusiastic machinist, two forms of collaboration that are equally perfidious. Ève, like the majority of women, by the way, was suspicious from sentiment and could not justify her suspicion to her own mind. She said to herself as she fell asleep :

"Who is there here who cares enough for my brother to have aroused the province in his favor? Besides, *Les Marguerites* is not published yet; how can they congratulate him on a future success?"

The triumph was, in fact, the work of Petit-Claud. On the day that the curé of Marsac told him of Lucien's return, the solicitor dined for the first time with Madame de Senonches, who was to receive the formal request for her goddaughter's hand. It was one of those family dinners whose solemn character is indicated by the toilettes rather than by the number of guests. Although it is a family party, everyone understands that it is a great occasion, and every countenance gives indication of a set purpose on the part of its owner. Françoise was arrayed as if for display in a shop window. Madame de Senonches had hoisted the flag of her most elegant gown. Monsieur du Hautoy wore a black coat. Monsieur de Senonches, to whom his wife had written of the return of Madame du Châtelet, who was to appear for the first time in her salon, and of the formal presentation of a suitor for Françoise, had returned from Monsieur de Pimentel's. Cointet, in his finest chestnut-colored coat of an ecclesiastical cut, wore a diamond in his shirt front worth six thousand francs, the vengeance of the wealthy tradesman upon the penniless aristocrat. Petit-Claud, plucked and combed and scrubbed as he was, was unable to divest himself of his pert manner. It was impossible not to compare

the hatchet-faced solicitor, with his coat buttoned tight about him, to a frozen viper; but hope so increased the animation of his magpie eyes, he held himself so well in check and assumed such a frigid expression that he just attained the dignity of an ambitious little king's attorney.

Madame de Senonches had requested her intimate friends not to say a word as to the first meeting between her ward and a suitor, or as to the appearance of the prefect's wife, so that she expected that her salon would be well filled. Monsieur le Préfet and his wife had made their formal calls by leaving cards, reserving the honor of personal visits as a method of gaining some special end. Thus the Angoulême aristocracy was so devoured by overpowering curiosity that several persons from the Chandour camp proposed to visit the Hôtel de Bargeton—they persistently refused to speak of the house as the Hôtel de Senonches. The proof of the Comtesse du Châtelet's influence had aroused many ambitions; and furthermore she was said to be so changed for the better that everyone wanted to see her and judge for himself. Upon learning from Cointet on their way to the house, that Zéphirine had obtained from the prefect's wife the signal favor of being allowed to present dear Françoise's intended spouse to her, Petit-Claud flattered himself that he could make something out of the false position in which Louise de Nègrepelisse was placed by Lucien's return.

Monsieur and Madame de Senonches had assumed

such a heavy burden when they purchased their house, that, like prudent provincials, they had thought it best not to make the slightest change in it. And so Zéphirine's first words to Louise, as she went to meet her when her name was announced, were :

"See, my dear Louise—you are still at home here!" pointing to the little chandelier with glass pendants, the wainscoting and the furniture that had once fascinated Lucien.

"That, my dear, is what I am least anxious to remember," said Madame la Préfète graciously, casting a glance about her at the assembled company.

Everyone agreed that Louise de Nègrepelisse did not look like the same person. Parisian society in which she had lived for eighteen months, the first pleasures of her married life, which transformed the woman as completely as Paris had transformed the provincial, the species of dignity that power imparts, all combined to make of the Comtesse du Châtelet a woman who resembled Madame de Bargeton as a girl of twenty resembles her mother. She wore a lovely cap trimmed with lace and flowers and carelessly secured with a diamond-headed pin. The English method of dressing the hair was well suited to her face and made it look younger by concealing its outlines. She wore a silk dress, with the waist cut in a point, trimmed with beautiful fringe and made by the famous Victorine in such a way as to show her figure to the best advantage. Her shoulders,

covered with a neckerchief of blond lace, were hardly visible beneath a gauze scarf skilfully twisted about her too long neck. Lastly she was toying with the pretty trifles, the management of which is the reef upon which provincial ladies often come to grief: a pretty smelling-bottle hung by a chain from her bracelet; she held in one hand her fan and her handkerchief without the slightest awkwardness. The exquisite taste shown in the smallest details, the pose and the manners copied from Madame d'Espard showed that Louise had made a careful study of Faubourg Saint-Germain. As for the ex-beau of the Empire, marriage had forced him, like the melons that turn from green to yellow in a single night. Finding upon the blooming features of his wife the freshness and verdure that Sixte had lost, the guests indulged in whispered jests among themselves, the more eagerly because all the women were enraged by the renewed superiority of the former queen of Angoulême; and the persistent intruder must pay for his wife. With the exception of Monsieur de Chandour and his wife, the deceased Bargeton, Monsieur de Pimentel and the Rastignacs, the salon was filled with almost the same company as on the evening of Lucien's reading there, for Monseigneur the Bishop arrived in due course, attended by his grand vicars. Petit-Claud, deeply impressed by the spectacle of the Angoulême aristocracy, into which four months earlier he despaired of ever forcing his way, was conscious that his hatred of the upper classes was growing less virulent.

He thought the Comtesse du Châtelet ravishingly beautiful, and he said to himself:

"There's the woman who can secure my appointment as deputy king's attorney!"

About the middle of the evening, after she had talked for the same length of time with each of the ladies, varying the tone of her conversation according to the importance of the person she was talking with and the stand she had taken concerning her flight with Lucien, Louise withdrew to the boudoir with the bishop. Thereupon Zéphirine took Petit-Claud's arm and led him, his heart beating fast, to that boudoir where Lucien's misfortunes had begun and where the finishing touch was about to be put to them.

"This is Monsieur Petit-Claud, my dear; I commend him to you the more earnestly because whatever you may do for him will in all probability redound to the benefit of my goddaughter."

"You are a solicitor, monsieur?" said the august daughter of the Nègrepelisses, eying Petit-Claud from head to foot.

"Alas! yes, *Madame la Comtesse*."

Never before in all his life, had the son of the L'Houmeau tailor had occasion to use those three words; and so they seemed to fill his mouth to overflowing.

"But," he continued, "it is for Madame la Comtesse to say whether I shall have the right to stand at the bar. Monsieur Milaud, they say, is going to Nevers."

"But," observed the countess, "does not one serve first as second deputy, then as first? I should like to see you made first deputy at once. Before attempting to obtain that favor for you, I must have some assurance of your devotion to the legitimate line, the religion, and above all, to Monsieur de Villèle."

"Ah! madame," said Petit-Claud, putting his mouth near her ear, "I am the man to obey the king unquestioningly."

"That is what *we* need to-day." she rejoined, drawing back to make him understand that she wished no more whispered confidences. "If you are satisfactory to Madame de Senonches, rely on me," she added, with a royal wave of her fan.

"Madame," said Petit-Claud, as Cointet appeared at the door of the boudoir, "Lucien is here."

"Well, monsieur?" replied the countess in a tone that would have checked any sort of rejoinder in the throat of an ordinary man.

"Madame la Comtesse does not understand me," rejoined Petit-Claud, using the most respectful formula, "it is my purpose to afford her a proof of my devotion to her person. How does Madame la Comtesse wish that the great man she formed should be received in Angoulême? There is no middle course: he must be an object of contempt or of adulation."

Louise de Nègrepelisse had not thought of that dilemma, which evidently interested her, more on

account of the past than of the present. Now, the success of the plan devised by the solicitor to effect Séchard's arrest depended upon the countess's present feelings toward Lucien.

"Monsieur Petit-Claud," she said, assuming a haughty, dignified attitude, "you desire to belong to the government. Understand that its first principle of action must be that it has never been in the wrong, and that women have in even greater measure than governments the instinct of power and the consciousness of their dignity."

"This is just what I was thinking, madame," he replied hastily, watching the countess with deep but carefully concealed intentness. "Lucien returns in utter destitution. But if he should receive an ovation here, I can compel him, by virtue of that very ovation, to leave Angoulême, where his sister and brother-in-law are being hotly pursued in the courts."

Louise de Nègrepelisse's proud features contracted slightly in the attempt she made to conceal her pleasure. Surprised to find her wishes so cleverly divined, she looked Petit-Claud in the face, while unfolding her fan ; Françoise de la Haye entered the room at that moment, and gave her time to find an answer.

"Monsieur," she said with a meaning smile, "you will soon be king's attorney."

Was not that a way of saying all that was necessary without compromising herself ?

"Oh ! madame," cried Françoise, rushing up to

thank the countess, "then I shall owe the happiness of my life to you!"

She leaned over her protectress with the kittenish manner of a young girl, and whispered in her ear:

"It would be like burning at a slow fire to be the wife of a provincial solicitor."

In throwing herself upon Louise in this way, Zéphirine was guided by Francis, who was not lacking in familiarity with the ways of bureaucratic circles.

"In the early days of one's incumbency of any post, whether it be that of prefect or head of a dynasty or chairman of a company," said the former consul general to his friend, "one is all hot to confer favors; but one soon appreciates the drawbacks of patronage and becomes as ice. To-day Louise will do things for Petit-Claud that she wouldn't do for your husband three months hence."

"Does Madame la Comtesse realize," said Petit-Claud, "all the obligations attendant upon our poet's triumph? She will have to receive Lucien during the ten days that our infatuation lasts."

The countess bowed to dismiss Petit-Claud, and rose to go and talk with Madame de Pimentel, whose face appeared at the door of the boudoir. Moved by the news of goodman De Nègrepelisse's elevation to the peerage, the marchioness had thought it advisable to come and flatter a woman who was adroit enough to have increased her influence by committing a quasi-sin.

"Pray tell me, my dear, why you took the

trouble to put your father in the Upper Chamber?" said the marchioness in the course of a confidential conversation, in which she bent the knee before the superiority of *her dear* Louise.

"My dear, that favor was granted the more readily because my father has no sons and will always vote with the crown; but, if I have sons, I propose that my oldest shall inherit his grandfather's title, arms and peerage."

Madame de Pimentel was annoyed to find that she could not employ a mother whose ambition extended to children still unborn, to assist in carrying out her desire to secure Monsieur de Pimentel's elevation to the peerage.

"I have the prefect's wife," said Petit-Claud to Cointet as they left the house, "and I promise you your partnership articles. In a month I shall be first deputy and you will have Séchard in your power. Try now to find me a purchaser for my office; in five months I have built up the best practice in Angoulême."

"You mustn't ride too high a horse," said Cointet, almost jealous of his work.

Now, everyone can understand the reason of Lucien's triumph in his province. After the manner of that king of France who did not avenge the Duc d'Orléans, Louise preferred not to remember the insults heaped upon Madame de Bargeton in Paris. She determined to patronize Lucien, to crush him with her patronage and to rid herself of him *honorably*. As he had learned the whole story

of the Parisian intrigue from current gossip, Petit-Claud had shrewdly divined the bitter hatred a woman was certain to entertain for the man who had declined to love her when she longed to be loved.

On the day following the ovation which justified Louise de Nègrepelisse's past, Petit-Claud, to put the finishing touches to Lucien's intoxication and make himself his master, presented himself at Madame Séchard's at the head of six young men of the town, all former schoolfellows of Lucien at the college of Angoulême.

This deputation was sent to the author of *Les Marguerites* and *L'Archer de Charles IX.* by his fellow students, to request him to be present at the banquet they proposed to give the great man who had gone forth from their ranks.

"Hallo! it is you, Petit-Claud!" cried Lucien.

"Your return," said Petit-Claud, "has given a fillip to our self-esteem, we feel in honor bound to entertain you, so we have levied an assessment and propose to have a magnificent repast. Our head-master and our professors will be there; and, to judge from the present aspect of affairs, we shall probably have the authorities."

"What day is it to be?" said Lucien.

"Next Sunday."

"That would be impossible for me," replied the poet, "I cannot accept for any day for ten days to come. But then I shall be very glad."

"Very well, we are at your service," said Petit-Claud, "ten days hence."

Lucien was delightful with his former comrades who manifested an almost respectful admiration for him. He conversed for about half an hour with much wit, for he found himself upon a pedestal and he wished to justify the opinion of the province: he put his hands in his pockets, he talked like a man who looks at things from the height on which his fellow-citizens have placed him. He was modest and agreeable, like a genius in undress uniform. It was the lament of an athlete tired of the never-ending conflicts at Paris, and, above all things, disenchanted; he congratulated his comrades upon never having left their dear province, etc. He left them all charmed with him. Then he took Petit-Claud aside and demanded the truth concerning David's affairs, blaming him for the state of sequestration in which his brother-in-law was then living. Lucien tried to be cunning with him. Petit-Claud exerted himself to give his former schoolfellow the impression that he, Petit-Claud, was simply a poor little provincial solicitor, utterly devoid of shrewdness. The present constitution of society, infinitely more complicated in its mechanism than that of society as it was, has had the effect of subdividing the faculties in man. Formerly eminent men, being necessarily great in every direction, appeared in small numbers only, like torches in the midst of the ancient peoples. Later, although the faculties tended to specialization, a man's good or bad qualities were still manifested with reference to all things alike. For instance, a man *rich in craft*, as was said

of Louis XI., could apply his cunning to everything; but to-day, even the qualities are subdivided. For example, there are as many different varieties of strategy as there are professions. A crafty diplomatist may be completely taken in, in a matter of business, by a solicitor of moderate talents or even by a peasant, in the depths of the provinces. The craftiest journalist may find himself a mere nobody in a matter concerning business interests, and Lucien was likely to be and was a plaything in Petit-Claud's hands. The designing solicitor had of course written the article by which the town of Angoulême, finding its dignity compromised by its suburb, L'Houmeau, was compelled to make a hero of Lucien. Lucien's fellow-citizens, who had serenaded him on Place du Mûrier, were the workmen from Cointet's printing-office and paper-mill, accompanied by Petit-Claud's clerks, Cachan, and some of his old schoolfellows. Having become once more the *bosom friend* of the old college days, the solicitor thought, and with good reason, that his comrade would divulge the secret of David's hiding-place sooner or later. And, if David were ruined by Lucien's fault, the poet would find it impossible to remain in Angoulême. And so, he posed as Lucien's inferior, in order to strengthen his hold upon him.

"How could I have failed to do the best I could?" said Petit-Claud to Lucien. "My best friend's sister was involved in the affair; but, at the Palais, there are some positions from which a man can't escape. On June first, David asked me to assure

him three months' tranquillity; he was not threatened with arrest until September, and in addition I have succeeded in rescuing all his assets from his creditors; for I shall win the appeal in the Royal Court; I shall obtain a decree that the wife's privilege is absolute and that, in the present case, it covers no fraud. As for you, you return in a sad plight, but you're a man of genius."

Lucien made a gesture as of one who finds the censer too near his nose.

"Yes, my dear fellow," continued Petit-Claud, "I have read *L'Archer de Charles IX.*, and it is more than a work, it is a book! The preface could have been written by only two men, Chateaubriand and yourself!"

Lucien accepted the flattery, not thinking it worth his while to say that the preface was by D'Arthez. Ninety-nine out of a hundred French authors would have done as he did.

"In this place, people don't seem to know you," continued Petit-Claud with feigned indignation. "When I saw the general indifference, I took it into my head to revolutionize the whole place. I wrote the article that you read—"

"What, it was you, who—" cried Lucien.

"Myself! Angoulême and L'Houmeau are rivals in this matter, so I collected some young men, your former schoolfellows and organized last night's serenade; then, when the enthusiasm was well under way, we started the subscription for the dinner. 'Even if David is in hiding, Lucien shall be

crowned!' I said to myself. I have done better than that, I have seen the Comtesse du Châtelet and I impressed it upon her that she owed it to herself to extricate David from his present plight; she can do it and she must. If David has really found the secret of which he spoke to me, the government won't ruin itself by giving him a lift, and what a card for a prefect to have it appear as if he were partly responsible for such a great discovery, by virtue of his lucky patronage of the inventor! People would speak of him as a most enlightened official. Your sister is frightened at the rattle of our legal musketry! she's afraid of the smoke. War at the Palais is as expensive as in the field; but David has held his position, he is master of his secret; they can't arrest him, they shan't arrest him!"

"I thank you, my dear fellow, and I see that I can confide my plan to you and you will help me to carry it out."

Petit-Claud looked at Lucien, cocking his corkscrew nose with a questioning air.

"I want to save Séchard," said Lucien with a sort of importance, "I am the cause of his misfortunes, I will set everything right. I have more influence over Louise—"

"Who's Louise?"

"The Comtesse du Châtelet."

Petit-Claud nodded.

"I have more influence over her than she herself thinks," continued Lucien; "but, my dear fellow,

although I have power over your governors, I have no clothes—"

Petit-Claud made a movement as if to offer him his purse.

"Thanks," said Lucien, pressing the solicitor's hand. "Ten days hence I will call upon Madame la Préfète and return your call."

And they separated with the hearty handshake of the best of friends.

"He must be a poet," said Petit-Claud to himself, "for he's mad."

"No matter what people may say," thought Lucien as he returned to his sister; "there are no friends like the friends one makes at school."

"Lucien, dear," said Ève, "what did Petit-Claud promise you to make you feel so friendly to him? Look out for him!"

"For him!" cried Lucien. "Look you, Ève," he continued, as if upon reflection, "you no longer believe in me, you distrust me, so you may well distrust Petit-Claud; but in ten or twelve days, you will change your opinion," he added with a conceited air.

Lucien went up to his room and wrote the following letter to Lousteau:

"MY FRIEND,

"Only I of us two am likely to remember the thousand-franc note I lent you; but I know too well, alas! the plight you are likely to be in when you open this letter, not to add at once that I do not ask you to repay it in gold or silver coin; I ask you to pay it in credit, as one would ask Florine to pay in pleasure. We have the same tailor, so that you

can have a complete outfit made for me without loss of time. Without being precisely in the costume of Adam, I can not show myself. In this place, the departmental honors bestowed upon Parisian celebrities awaited me, to my unbounded astonishment. I am to be the hero of a banquet, precisely like a deputy of the Left; do you understand now my pressing need of a black coat? Promise to pay for it, work the newspaper for all it is worth; in short, invent an unpublished scene between Don Juan and Monsieur Dimanche, for I must have some Sunday clothes at any price. I have nothing but rags: start from that! It is now August and the weather is superb; *ergo*, see to it that I receive, by the end of this week, a charming morning costume! short frockcoat of a dark bronze-green, three waistcoats, one sulphur-colored, one fancy, Scotch style, and one all white; furthermore, three pairs of trousers *to fetch the ladies*, one of white English cloth, one of nankeen, the third of thin black cassimere; lastly, a black coat and black satin waistcoat for evening wear. If you have taken up with another Florine, I commend myself to her for two fancy cravats. This is no small matter, I rely upon you, upon your address; the tailor worries me very little. My dear friend, we have many a time deplored the intelligence of poverty, which is certainly the most active poison with which the man *par excellence*, the Parisian, is infected! but that intelligence, whose activity would surprise Satan himself, has never yet invented a way of getting a hat on credit! When we have introduced the fashion of hats worth a thousand francs, hats will be possible; but until then, one must always have money enough in his pocket to pay for a hat. Ah! what an injury the Comédie-Française inflicted on us with its *Lafleur, you will put gold in my pockets!* Therefore, I feel keenly all the difficulties that lie in the way of the execution of this commission: add a pair of boots, a pair of pumps, a hat, six pairs of gloves, and have them sent to the tailor. It is asking the impossible, I know. But is not literary life impossible on any regular plan? I have just this one thing to say to you: perform this miracle for me by writing some great article or

perpetrating some little knavery, and I'll give you a receipt in full for your debt. And it's a debt of honor, my friend, it's been twelve months on my books; you would blush for it if you could blush. My dear Lousteau, joking aside, I am in a serious predicament. Judge of it by these facts! the Cuttlefish has grown fat, she has become the wife of the Heron and the Heron is Prefect of Angoulême. That ugly couple can do much for my brother-in-law, whom I have placed in a terrible position; there is an order for his arrest and he is in hiding, all because of a promissory note! What I must do is to reappear before Madame la Préfète and regain some influence over her at any cost. Is it not horrible to think that David Séchard's fortunes depend upon a pretty pair of boots, gray silk open-work stockings—don't forget them—and a new hat! I propose to say that I am ill and take to my bed, as Duvicquet did, in order to avoid responding to the importunities of my fellow-citizens. My fellow-citizens gave me a very fine serenade, my friend. I am beginning to ask how many fools go to make up that expression: *my fellow-citizens*, since I have learned that the enthusiasm of the capital of Angoulême had some of my old college chums for its leading spirits.

"If you could put a few lines in the Paris items about my reception, you would increase my stature here by the thickness of several boot heels. Moreover, I could make the Cuttlefish understand that I still have some influence at least, if no friends, in the Parisian press. As I renounce none of my hopes, I will pay that back to you. If you need a good long article for any purpose, I have plenty of time to meditate upon it. I have but one word more to say, my dear friend! I rely upon you as you may rely upon him who subscribes himself

"Yours faithfully,

"LUCIEN DE R."

"P. S.—Address everything to me, by diligence, to be called for."

This letter, in which Lucien resumed the tone of

superiority which his triumph caused him to feel inwardly, reminded him of Paris. Having been for six days under the influence of the absolute tranquillity of the province, his thoughts went back to his happy poverty, he had vague regrets, his mind was engrossed for a whole week by thoughts of the Comtesse du Châtelet; indeed, he attached so much importance to his reappearance in society that, when he went down to L'Houmeau at nightfall to inquire at the diligence office for the packages he was expecting from Paris, he experienced all the agony of uncertainty, like a woman who has rested her last hope on a new dress and despairs of receiving it.

"Ah! Lousteau, I forgive you all your treachery," he said to himself, when he saw by the shape of the packages that they probably contained all he had asked for.

He found the following letter in the hatbox:

"*From Florine's salon.*

"MY DEAR BOY,

"The tailor behaved very well; but as your keen retrospective glance led you to foresee, our hearts have been troubled to procure the cravats, the hat and the silk stockings, for there was nothing in our purses to trouble. We agreed with Blondet; there's a fortune in store for the man who sets up an establishment where young men can find inexpensive things. For we end by paying very dear for the things we don't pay for. The great Napoleon, you know, when he was checked in his progress toward the Indies by the lack of a pair of boots, remarked: *Things that are easy to do are never done!* Well, everything went all right except your footwear. I imagined you dressed without a hat, waistcoated without shoes, and I thought of sending you a pair of moccasins that an

American gave Florine as a curiosity. Florine offered a stack of forty francs to gamble for you. Nathan, Blondet and I were so overjoyed to be playing for somebody else that we won enough to take La Torpille, Des Lupeaulx's former *rat*, to supper. Frascati owed us as much as that. Florine undertook to make the purchases; she has added three fine shirts. Nathan offers you a cane. Blondet, who won three hundred francs, sends you a gold chain. The *rat* contributes a gold watch of the size of a 40 franc piece, which some idiot gave her and which doesn't go: 'it's showy, like that he's had!' she said. Bixiou, who joined us at the *Rocher de Cancale*, wanted to put a flagon of *eau de Portugal* in the parcel that Paris sends you. Our *premier comique* said: 'If that will make him happy, may he be happy!' with the deep bass voice and the bourgeois importance he depicts so well. All of which, my dear friend, goes to prove how we love our friends in misfortune. Florine, whom I have been weak enough to forgive, begs you to send us an article on Nathan's latest work. Adieu, my son! I can but pity you for having returned to the crib you came from, when you made an old comrade of

"Your friend.

"ÉTIENNE L."

"Poor fellows! they gambled for me!" he said to himself, deeply moved.

There come from unhealthy countries or from those where one has suffered most, puffs of air that resemble the perfumes of paradise. In a colorless life, the memory of past suffering is like a vague, indefinable joy. Ève was stupefied when her brother came down in his new clothes; she did not recognize him.

"Now I can go and walk at Beaulieu," he cried; "people won't say of me: 'He has come back in

rags!' Here's a watch I will give you, for it's really mine; and then it's like me, it's out of order."

"What a child you are!" said Ève. "One cannot be angry with you for anything."

"Pray, did you think, my dear girl, that I asked for all this with the foolish idea of shining in the eyes of Angoulême, for which I care no more than that!" he said, thrashing the air with his cane with its knob of chased gold. "I propose to undo the harm I have done and I have put myself under arms."

Lucien's success as a dandy was the only genuine triumph he obtained; but it was immense. Envy loosens as many tongues as admiration freezes. The women went mad over him, the men spoke ill of him and he could cry with the balladist: *O my coat, how I thank thee!* He left two cards at the prefecture and also called upon Petit-Claud, whom he did not find. On the following day, the day of the banquet, the Paris papers all contained the following lines, under the heading of Angoulême!

"ANGOULÊME. The return of a young poet, whose career has begun so brilliantly, the author of *L'Archer de Charles IX.*, the only historical novel that has been written in France without copying Walter Scott, with a preface that is in itself an event in literature, has been signalized by an ovation as flattering to the city as to Monsieur Lucien de Rubempré. The city has lost no time in proffering him a patriotic banquet. The new prefect, very recently installed, has associated himself with the public manifestation by entertaining the author of *Les Marguerites*, whose talent was so warmly encouraged in the beginning by Madame la Comtesse du Châtelet."

In France, when the impulse has once been given, nothing can stay its course. The colonel of the regiment in garrison offered his band. The maître d'hôtel of the *Cloche*, the famous innkeeper of L'Houmeau, whose truffled turkeys are sent as far as China, packed in the most magnificent porcelain jars, was entrusted with the preparation of the repast; he had decorated his great dining-hall with flags upon which laurel wreaths intertwined with bouquets produced a grand effect. At five o'clock forty persons were assembled, all in full dress. A crowd of more than a hundred natives, attracted principally by the musicians in the courtyard, represented the fellow-citizens.

"All Angoulême is out there!" said Petit-Claud, stationing himself at the window.

"I don't understand it at all," said Postel to his wife, who came to listen to the music. "What! the prefect, the receiver-general, the colonel, the superintendent of the arsenal, our deputy, the mayor, the headmaster of the college, the manager of the Ruelle foundry, the president of the court, and the king's attorney, Monsieur Milaud,—all the authorities have arrived!"

When they took their places at the table, the military orchestra began with variations on the air of *Vive le roi, vive la France!* which never became popular. It was five in the afternoon. At eight o'clock, a dessert of sixty-five dishes, notable for an Olympus in sugarwork, surmounted by a represen-

tation of France in chocolate, gave the signal for the toasts.

"Messieurs," said the prefect, rising, "the king! —the legitimate line! Are we not indebted to the peace the Bourbons have restored, for the generation of poets and thinkers who retain the sceptre of literature in the hands of France?"

"*Vive le roi!*" cried the guests, among whom the ministerialists were in great force.

The venerable headmaster rose.

"I give you the young poet," he said, "the hero of the day, who combines with the poetic grace of Petrarch, in a style of poetry which Boileau declared to be most difficult, the talent of the writer of prose!"

"Bravo! bravo!"

The colonel rose.

"To the royalist, messieurs! for the hero of this occasion had the courage to defend right principles!"

"Bravo!" exclaimed the prefect, who gave the signal for the applause.

Petit-Claud rose.

"Lucien's schoolmates all, I give you the glory of the college of Angoulême, the venerable headmaster, who is so dear to us all, and to whom we must attribute a full share in our success!"

The old headmaster, who did not expect this toast, wiped his eyes. Lucien rose; the most profound silence ensued, and the poet turned white. At that moment, the old headmaster, who was at his left, placed a laurel wreath on his head. There

was a great clapping of hands. There were tears in Lucien's eyes and his voice trembled.

"He's drunk," said the future king's attorney at Nevers to Petit-Claud.

"He's not drunk with wine," rejoined the solicitor.

"My dear compatriots, my dear schoolmates," said Lucien at last, "I would that all France might witness this scene. Thus men are reared and great works and great actions inspired in our province. But, in view of the little I have done and the great honor I receive for it, I can but feel confused and look to the future to justify your reception of to-day. The memory of this moment will renew my strength for fresh conflicts. Permit me to commend to your homage the name of her who was my first muse and my patroness, and to drink also to my native city: I give you, therefore, the lovely Comtesse Sixte du Châtelet and the noble city of Angoulême!"

"He got out of it very well indeed," said the king's attorney, nodding his head in token of approbation; "for our toasts were all prepared and his was improvised."

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At ten o'clock the guests departed in groups. David Séchard, hearing the music and the extraordinary commotion, said to Basine :

" What's going on at L'Houmeau ? "

" They're giving a banquet to your brother-in-law Lucien," she replied.

" I am sure," said he, " that he must have regretted not seeing me there ! "

At midnight, Petit-Claud walked with Lucien to Place du Mûrier.

" My dear fellow, we are friends for life and death," said Lucien.

" To-morrow," said the solicitor, at " Madame de Senonches', my marriage contract with Mademoiselle de la Haye, her ward, is to be signed ; do me the pleasure to come ; Madame de Senonches has requested me to bring you and you will see the prefect's wife, who will be much flattered by the toast, which she will hear all about, of course."

" I had my little plan," said Lucien.

" Oh ! you will save David ! "

" I am sure of it,' the poet replied.

At that moment David appeared as if by enchant-

ment. This is the explanation. He was in a very difficult position: his wife absolutely forbade his seeing Lucien or letting him know where he was hidden, whereas Lucien was writing him the most affectionate letters, telling him that in a few days he would have made everything right. Now, Mademoiselle Clerget, when she was explaining to David the presence of the band, had handed him these two letters:

"My love, act as if Lucien were not here; do not worry about anything and write on your dear brain this proposition: our security consists wholly in the impossibility of your enemies finding out where you are. It is my misfortune that I have more confidence in Kolb, in Marion, in Basine, than in my brother. Alas! my poor Lucien is no longer the innocent, gentle poet that we used to know. I fear him for the very reason that he wishes to meddle in your affairs and talks about getting our debts paid—through pride, my David! He has received from Paris some fine clothes and five gold pieces in a lovely purse. He placed them at my disposal and we are now living on that money. We have at last one enemy less: your father has left us and we are indebted for his departure to Petit-Claud, who fathomed Père Séchard's intentions and nipped them in the bud by telling him that you would do nothing except by his advice; that he, Petit-Claud, would not let you dispose of any part of your invention without a preliminary contribution of thirty thousand francs; fifteen thousand to pay your debts and fifteen thousand that were to belong to you in any event, successful or unsuccessful. Petit-Claud is an inexplicable mystery to me. I embrace you as a wife embraces her unhappy husband. Our little Lucien is doing well. What a spectacle! that little flower blossoming and growing amid our domestic tempests! My mother, as always, prays for you and kisses you as fondly as

"Your own ÈVE."

Petit-Claud and the Cointets, alarmed by old Séchard's peasant cunning, had, as we see, rid themselves of him, the more easily as harvest time recalled him to his vineyards at Marsac.

Lucien's letter, inclosed in Ève's, was thus conceived:

"My dear David, all goes well. I am armed from head to foot; I take the field to-day; in two days I shall have made much progress. With what joy shall I embrace you when you are free and clear of my debts! But I am wounded to the heart and for my life, by the distrust of me that my mother and sister continue to display. Don't I know already that you are in hiding at Basine's? Whenever Basine comes to the house I have news of you and an answer to my letters. It is clear enough, too, that my sister could not depend on anybody but her old shopmate. To-day I shall be very near you and cruelly grieved that you cannot be present at the dinner to be given me. The self-esteem of Angoulême is responsible for this little triumph which, in a few days, will be entirely forgotten, and at which yours would have been the only sincere joy. However, only a few days more and you will freely forgive him who counts it of more value than all earthly glory to be

"Your brother,

"LUCIEN."

David's heart was sadly torn by these two forces, although they were unequal: for he adored his wife, and his affection for Lucien had diminished through the loss of a little of his esteem. But in solitude, the power of the sentiments changes entirely. The solitary man, given over to such absorbing thoughts as those which devoured David, yields to impulses against which he would find points of support amid

the ordinary surroundings of life. Thus, upon reading Lucien's letters amid the blaring trumpets of that unexpected triumph, he was deeply moved to find expressed therein, the regret he had reckoned upon. Loving hearts do not resist such little bursts of emotion, which they imagine to be as powerful in others as in themselves. Is it not the drop of water falling from the full cup? So it was that all Basine's supplications were powerless to prevent David from going to see Lucien about midnight.

"No one is walking in the streets of Angoulême at this hour," he said to her; "no one will see me and they can't arrest me at night; and, even if somebody should meet me, I can make use of the method invented by Kolb to return to my hiding-place. Besides, it's altogether too long since I have kissed my wife and child."

Basine yielded to all these plausible arguments and allowed him to go. "Lucien!" he cried, just as Lucien and Petit-Claud were saying good-night. And the two brothers threw themselves into each other's arms, weeping.

There are not many such moments in a lifetime. Lucien was conscious of the outpouring of one of those affections that nothing cools, with which one never has to haggle and which one reproaches one's self for having betrayed. David felt the need of forgiving. The generous, noble-hearted genius proposed, first of all, to preach to Lucien and scatter the clouds that dimmed the love of the brother and sister. Before those sentimental considerations,

all the perils engendered by lack of funds disappeared.

"Go home," said Petit-Claud to his client, "and, at all events, take advantage of your imprudence to embrace your wife and child—and don't let any one see you!—What a misfortune!" said Petit-Claud to himself, when he was left alone on Place du Mûrier. "Ah! if I had Cérizet here!"

As the solicitor, talking to himself, walked along the board fence built around the spot where to-day the Palais de Justice proudly rears its head, he heard a knocking on one of the boards, as when one taps on a door with the hand.

"I am here," said Cérizet, whose voice emerged through the crack between two ill-joined boards. "I saw David leave L'Houmeau. I was beginning to suspect his hiding-place, now I am sure of it, and I know where to *pinch* him; but, in order to lay a trap for him, I must know something about Lucien's plans and you have sent them into the house! At all events, stay here on some pretext or other. When David and Lucien come out, bring them near me; they will think they're alone and I shall hear the last words of their parting."

"You're a master devil!" muttered Petit-Claud.

"Deuce take me!" cried Cérizet, "what wouldn't a man do to get what you promised me!"

Petit-Claud left the board fence and walked about on Place du Mûrier, glancing up at the windows of the room where the family was assembled and thinking of his future, as if to give himself courage;

for Cérizet's cunning enabled him to strike the last blow. Petit-Claud was one of those profoundly sly, treacherous, two-faced men, who never allow themselves to be caught by the allurements of the present nor by the bait of any sort of attachment, after they have remarked the frequent changes of feeling in the human heart and the ruses of self-interest. Thus he had at first placed little reliance on Cointet. In the event that the scheme for his marriage had fallen through, without giving him the right to accuse Cointet the Great of treachery, he would have taken measures to annoy him; but since his success at the Hôtel de Bargeton, he was keeping faith with him. His secret design, now become useless, was attended with danger to his political aspirations. These are the foundations upon which he proposed to rest his future eminence: Gannerac and some wealthy tradesmen of L'Houmeau were beginning to form a liberal committee whose members were connected by business relations with the leaders of the opposition. The accession of the Villèle ministry, accepted by Louis XVIII. on his deathbed, was the signal for a change of tactics on the part of the opposition, who, since Napoléon's death, had renounced the dangerous method of conspiracies. The liberal party was organizing its forces in the provinces to carry out its scheme of resistance within the law: it aimed at obtaining control of the electorate, in order to gain its end by convincing the masses. Petit-Claud, being an enthusiastic liberal and son of L'Houmeau, was the promoter, the secret

adviser and the soul of the opposition in the Lower Town, which was trampled upon by the aristocracy of the Upper Town. He was the first to perceive the danger of allowing the Cointets to enjoy the sole control of the press in the department of the Charente, where the opposition should have an organ, in order not to remain behind other towns.

"Let us each give a five-hundred-franc note to Gannerac; he will have something over twenty thousand francs to buy the Séchard printing-office, which we shall then have in our hands, as we shall hold the purchaser by his debt to us for our loans," said Petit-Claud.

The solicitor induced his associates to adopt this idea, with a view of strengthening his inconsistent position with reference to the Cointets and Séchard, and he naturally cast his eyes upon a rascal of Cérizet's pattern to be the devoted slave of the party.

"If you can discover your former master and put him in my hands," he had said to Séchard's former proof-reader, "we will lend you twenty thousand francs to purchase his printing-office and you will probably be at the head of a newspaper. So, go ahead."

With greater confidence in the activity of a man like Cérizet than in that of all the Doublons on earth, Petit-Claud had thereupon promised Cointet the Great that Séchard should be arrested.

But, since Petit-Claud had cherished the hope of entering the magistracy, he had realized the necessity of turning his back on the liberals, and yet he had stirred the good people of L'Houmeau to such a

pitch of excitement that the necessary funds for the purchase of the printing-office were subscribed. Petit-Claud determined to let things take their natural course.

"Bah!" he said to himself, "Cérizet will violate some of the laws relating to the press, and I will seize the opportunity to show my talents."

He walked to the door of the printing-office, and said to Kolb who was doing sentry duty:

"Go up and tell David to take advantage of the quiet hour and go, and do you take every precaution; I am going home, it's one o'clock."

When Kolb left the doorway, Marion took his place. Lucien and David came down, Kolb walked a hundred paces in front of them and Marion followed a hundred paces behind. When the two brothers walked along by the board fence, Lucien was speaking to David with much warmth.

"My dear fellow," he said, "my plan is exceedingly simple; but how could I talk about it before Eve, who would never understand its details? I am sure that Louise has buried in her heart a longing that I can awaken and I mean to do it solely to be revenged on that idiot of a prefect. If we should love each other, if it were only for a week, I would make her ask the ministry for a subsidy of twenty thousand francs for you. To-morrow, I shall see that creature again in the little boudoir where our love began, and where, according to Petit-Claud, everything is as it used to be: I will play my little comedy there. So, day after to-morrow, I will send

you a line by Basine to tell you if I was hissed. Who knows, perhaps you will be free! Do you understand now why I wanted clothes from Paris? A fellow can't play the rôle of *jeune premier* in rags."

At six o'clock in the morning, Cérizet roused Petit-Claud.

"To-morrow, at noon, Doublon can be ready to strike; he will catch our man, I will answer for it," said the Parisian; "I have one of Mademoiselle Clerget's girls in my interest, d'ye see?"

After listening to Cérizet's plan, Petit-Claud hurried to the Cointets.

"Arrange it so that Monsieur du Hautoy will be prepared this evening to give Françoise her property outright, and in two days you and Séchard shall execute partnership articles. I will not be married until a week after the contract is signed; so we shall be well within the terms of our little agreement: *give and take*. But we must watch very carefully to-night to see what takes place at Madame de Senonches' between Lucien and Madame la Comtesse du Châtelet, for everything depends on that. If Lucien hopes to succeed by her assistance, I have David."

"You will be keeper of the seals, I really believe," said Cointet.

"And why not? Monsieur de Peyronnet is now!" rejoined Petit-Claud, who had not as yet divested himself altogether of his liberal's skin.

The equivocal position of Mademoiselle de la Haye attracted the greater part of the nobility of

Angoulême to the ceremony of signing the contract. The poverty of the future husband and wife, to be married without wedding gifts, awakened the interest that society delights to manifest: for it is the same with benevolence as with success: one delights in an act of charity that gratifies the self-esteem. And so the Marquise de Pimentel, the Comtesse du Châtelet, Monsieur de Senonches and two or three habitués of the house gave Françoise some little gifts which were much talked about in the town. These pretty trifles, added to the trousseau Zéphirine had been preparing for a year, to the godfather's jewels and the customary gifts from the groom, consoled Françoise and piqued the curiosity of several mothers, who were accompanied by their daughters.

Petit-Claud and Cointet had already remarked that the nobility of Angoulême simply tolerated them both in their Olympus as necessary evils; one was Françoise's substitute guardian, the manager of her fortune; the other was as indispensable to the signature of the contract as the man to be hanged is to an execution; but, although Madame Petit-Claud might retain the privilege of visiting her godmother on the day after her marriage, the husband saw that there would be some difficulty about his admission, and he made a vow that he would force himself upon that arrogant circle. Blushing for his humble parentage, the solicitor compelled his mother to remain at Mansle, whither she had retired, and begged her to say that she was sick and to give

her consent in writing. Deeply humiliated at his lack of relatives and patrons, of anybody to sign in his behalf, Petit-Claud was very happy to be able to present, in the hero of the hour, an acceptable sponsor and one whom the countess desired to see again. So he called for Lucien with a carriage.

For that memorable evening the poet had made a toilet which was certain to give him an incontestable advantage over all the other men present. Moreover Madame de Senonches had given out that the hero would be present, and an interview between two lovers who have quarrelled is one of those scenes which provincials enjoy with peculiar relish. Lucien had become a *lion;* he was said to be so altered, so handsome, so marvellously clever, that the noble ladies of Angoulême were all anxious to see him. Following the fashion of the period to which we owe the transition from the old knee-breeches to the vulgar trousers of the present day, he wore skin-tight black trousers. Men took this method of exhibiting the shape of their legs, to the great despair of thin or ill-made persons; and Lucien's were Apollo-like. His gray silk openwork stockings, his little shoes, his black satin waistcoat, his cravat, all were scrupulously fitted, glued, so to speak, to him. His abundant fair hair, well-curled, showed to advantage his white forehead, around which the curls rose and fell with studied grace. His eyes sparkled with pride. His small, womanish hands, beautiful in gloves, were not to be shown

ungloved. He modelled his manner and bearing upon De Marsay, the famous Parisian dandy, holding in one hand his cane and his hat, which he did not put down, and using the other for the infrequent gestures with which he emphasized his words. Lucien would have liked to slip into the salon after the manner of those celebrated persons who through false modesty, stoop under Porte Saint-Denis. But Petit-Claud, who had only one friend there, abused his friendship. His manner was almost pompous as he led Lucien up to Madame de Senonches toward the middle of the evening. As he passed, the poet heard murmurs which would formerly have made him lose his head, but which did not disturb him now; he was sure that he alone was a match for the whole Angoulême Olympus.

"Madame," he said to Madame de Senonches, "I have already congratulated my friend Petit-Claud who is of the stuff of which keepers of the seals are made, upon having the good fortune to belong to you, although the bond between a godmother and her goddaughter may be but a feeble one." This was said with an epigrammatic air thoroughly appreciated by all the women, who were listening without seeming to do so.—"But, for my own part, I bless the chance that enables me to offer you my respects."

He spoke without embarrassment, in the attitude of a great lord visiting people of small consequence. He listened to Zéphirine's involved reply, sending his eyes upon a tour of circumnavigation mean-

while, in order to arrange his plan of action. He bowed gracefully with carefully graded smiles, to Francis du Hautoy and the prefect, both of whom bowed to him; at last he came to Madame du Châtelet, pretending to discover her unexpectedly. This meeting was so decidedly the event of the evening, that the marriage contract, to which the people of note were to affix their signature, being escorted for that purpose to the bedroom by the notary or by Françoise, was entirely forgotten. Lucien took a few steps toward Louise de Nègrepelisse, and with that Parisian grace which had been only a memory to her since her arrival in the province, he said aloud:

"Do I owe to you, madame, the invitation which entitles me to the honor of dining at the prefecture on the day after to-morrow?"

"You owe it to your own renown, monsieur," replied Louise, dryly, somewhat vexed by the aggressive turn of the phrase Lucien had evolved to wound the pride of his former patroness.

"Ah! Madame la Comtesse," retorted Lucien, with an air at once cunning and conceited, "it is impossible for me to bring you the guest, if he is in disgrace with you."

And, without awaiting a reply, he turned on his heel as his eyes fell upon the bishop, whom he saluted with great dignity.

"Your Grace was almost prophetic," he said in a winning voice, "and I shall try to make you so absolutely. I esteem myself fortunate to have come

here this evening, as I have an opportunity to present my respects to you."

Lucien led monseigneur into a conversation that lasted ten minutes. All the women looked upon him as a phenomenon. His unexpected impertinence had left Madame du Châtelet speechless. When she saw all the women gazing at him in admiration; as she followed from group to group the whispered recital of the sentences exchanged between her and Lucien, when he had crushed her with every appearance of disdain, she was stung to the quick by the blow to her self-esteem.

"If he does not come to the prefecture after that remark, what a scandal there will be!" she thought. "Where does he get that pride? Can Mademoiselle des Touches be in love with him? He is so handsome! They say she went to him in Paris the day after the actress's death! Perhaps he came down here to save his brother-in-law, and happened to be behind our calèche at Mansle by a mere accident. Lucien eyed Sixte and myself in a very singular way that morning.

A multitude of thoughts passed through her mind, and, unfortunately for her, she allowed herself to be engrossed by them, watching Lucien meanwhile as he stood talking to the bishop as if he were the king of the salon: he bowed to no one but waited for people to come to him, looking about with a varying expression, with an ease of manner worthy of De Marsay, his model. He did not leave the prelate

even to pay his respects to Monsieur de Senonches, when he appeared a short distance away.

After ten minutes, Louise could stand it no longer. She left her chair, walked up to the bishop and said to him:

"What is he saying to you, pray, to make you smile so often, monseigneur?"

Lucien stepped back discreetly, to leave Madame du Châtelet alone with the prelate.

"Ah! Madame la Comtesse, that young man has much talent! He was telling me that he owed all his power to you."

"*I* am not ungrateful, madame," said Lucien, with a reproachful glance that delighted the countess.

"Let us understand each other," she said, bringing Lucien to her side with a wave of her fan, "come this way with monseigneur! His Grace shall be our judge."

She led the way to the boudoir with the bishop.

"She's making monseigneur do a pretty kind of work," said a lady from the Chandour camp, loud enough to be overheard.

"Our judge!" echoed Lucien, looking from the prelate to the countess; "so one of us is a culprit?"

Louise de Nègrepelisse seated herself on the couch in her former boudoir. Bidding Lucien sit on one side and monseigneur on the other, she began to talk. Lucien did his former sweetheart the honor of not listening to her, to her surprise and joy. His attitude and gestures were those of La Pasta in

Tancredi, when she says: *O patria!* His face seemed to be singing the famous cavatina *Dell Rizzo*. Finally Coralie's pupil succeeded in bringing a few tears to his eyes.

"Oh! Louise, how I loved you!" he whispered in her ear, heedless of the bishop and the conversation, when he saw that she had seen his tears.

"Wipe your eyes or you will ruin me, in this room, again," she said in an aside which vexed the bishop.

"And once is quite enough," rejoined Lucien, hastily. That remark of Madame d'Espard's cousin would have dried all the tears of a Magdalen. "*Mon Dieu!* for a moment I recovered my memories, my illusions, my twenty years, and you—"

Monseigneur abruptly returned to the salon, realizing that his dignity might be compromised with those two former lovers. Everyone made a point of leaving the prefect's wife and Lucien alone in the boudoir. But, some fifteen minutes later, Sixte, who was sorely annoyed by the comments, the significant smiles and the walking back and forth by the door of the boudoir, entered the room with a decidedly anxious air, and found Louise and Lucien talking with great animation.

"Madame," said Sixte in his wife's ear, "you know Angoulême much better than I—should you not think of Madame la Préfète and the government?"

"My dear," said Louise with a haughty stare at her responsible publisher that made him tremble,

"I am talking with Monsieur de Rubempré concerning matters of great importance to you. It is a question of rescuing an inventor who is on the point of falling a victim to the most despicable machinations, and you must help us in it. As for what these ladies may think of me, you shall see how I will freeze the poison on their tongues."

She left the boudoir leaning on Lucien's arm and took him to sign the contract, defying opinion with the audacity of a great lady.

"Let us sign together," she said, handing Lucien the pen.

Lucien allowed her to show him the place where she had signed, so that their signatures might come in succession.

"Monsieur de Senonches, would you have recognized Monsieur de Rubempré?" said the countess, compelling the impertinent sportsman to bow to Lucien.

She took him back to the salon and placed him between herself and Zéphirine on the redoubtable couch in the centre of the room. Then, like a queen on her throne, she began, at first in an undertone, an evidently epigrammatic conversation, which was shared in by some of her former friends and several ladies who were dancing attendance on her. Soon Lucien, having become the hero of the circle, was started by the countess on the subject of life in Paris, of which he described the satirical features with incredible spirit, introducing anecdotes of famous people, veritable sweetmeats of conversa-

tion, of which provincials are exceedingly fond. They admired the wit as they had admired the man. Madame la Comtesse Sixte strove so patiently to win a triumph with Lucien, she played so well the part of a woman enchanted with her instrument, she furnished him with retorts so opportunely, she sought approbation for him by such compromising glances, that several ladies began to detect in the coincidence of Lucien's return and Louise's, a deep-rooted passion interrupted by a misunderstanding on both sides. Perhaps spite was responsible for the unfortunate Châtelet marriage, against which a reaction set in.

"Well," said Louise in an undertone to Lucien, at one o'clock in the morning, as they rose to go, "day after to-morrow, and please be prompt."

The countess left Lucien with an exceedingly friendly little nod, and said a few words to Comte Sixte, who was looking for his hat.

"If what Madame du Châtelet has just told me is true, rely on me, my dear Lucien," said the prefect, starting in pursuit of his wife, who was going away without him in the Paris fashion. "From this evening, your brother-in-law may consider himself out of difficulty."

"Monsieur le Comte owes me as much as that," replied Lucien with a smile.

"Well, we are *smoked out!*" said Cointet in Petit-Claud's ear after witnessing this parting.

Petit-Claud, overwhelmed by Lucien's success, stupefied by his flashes of wit and by the skill with

which he made the most of his fascinations, glanced at Françoise de la Haye, whose face, overflowing with admiration of Lucien, seemed to say to her future husband: "Be like your friend."

A flash of joy passed over his face.

"The prefect's dinner is not until the day after to-morrow, we still have a day to ourselves, and I will answer for everything."

"Well, my dear fellow," said Lucien to Petit-Claud, as they were walking home together at two o'clock in the morning, "I came, I saw, I conquered! In a few hours, Séchard will be very happy."

"That is all I wanted to know," thought Petit-Claud.—"I thought you were only a poet, and you are enough of a Lauzun to be a poet twice over," he replied, with a grasp of the hand that was destined to be the last.

"Good news, my dear Ève!" said Lucien, waking his sister. "In a month David will be out of debt!"

"How so?"

"Well, Madame du Châtelet had my old Louise hidden under her skirt; she loves me more than ever and is going to have her husband make a report to the Ministry of the Interior, in favor of our invention! So we haven't more than a month longer to suffer, time enough to revenge myself on the prefect and make him the happiest of husbands."

Ève, as she listened to her brother, believed that she was still asleep and dreaming.

"When I saw once more the little gray salon

where I trembled like a child, two years ago; when I examined the furniture, the paintings and the faces about me, a film dropped from my eyes! How Paris changes one's ideas!"

"Is that a blessing?" said Eve, understanding her brother's meaning at last.

"Go to sleep again; to-morrow after breakfast we will talk," said Lucien.

❋

Cérizet's plan was exceedingly simple. Although it belongs to the class of ruses to which provincial bailiffs resort to arrest their debtors,—ruses whose success is problematical,—it was likely to succeed; for it was based as much upon a knowledge of the respective characters of Lucien and David as upon their hopes. Among the young workgirls whose Don Juan he was and whom he governed by opposing them to one another, the Cointets' proof-reader —at present detached on special service—had distinguished one of Basine Clerget's ironing girls, a girl almost as lovely as Madame Séchard, named Henriette Signol, whose parents were small vine-growers living on their estate within two leagues of Angoulême on the road to Saintes. The Signols, like most country people, were not rich enough to keep their only child at home, and they had decided to put her out to service, that is to say, to make a chambermaid of her. In the provinces, a chambermaid must know how to wash and iron fine linen. The reputation of Madame Prieur, whom Basine succeeded in business, was such that the Signols bound their daughter out as an apprentice to her,

paying for her board and lodging. Madame Prieur belonged to the race of old provincial mistresses who fancy that they take the place of parents. Her apprentices were part of her family, she took them to church and watched over them conscientiously. Henriette Signol, a lovely, buxom brunette, with a bold eye and long, thick hair, had the sallow complexion of Southern girls, like the flower of the magnolia. So it happened that Henriette was one of the first grisettes who caught Cérizet's eye; but as she belonged to *honest farmer folk*, she did not yield to him until she was vanquished by jealousy, by evil example and by the seductive phrase "I will marry you!" which Cérizet said to her as soon as he became second proof-reader for the Cointets. When he learned that the Signols possessed a vineyard worth ten or twelve thousand francs and a comfortable little house, the Parisian hastened to make it impossible for Henriette to be the wife of another.

The loves of the fair Henriette and little Cérizet were at that point when Petit-Claud spoke of giving him the Séchard printing-office, proposing a sort of limited partnership with a capital of twenty thousand francs, which was destined to prove a halter. This prospect dazzled the proof-reader and turned his head. Mademoiselle Signol seemed to him to be an obstacle in the way of his ambition, and he neglected the poor girl. Henriette, in despair, clung the more closely to him because he seemed inclined to leave her. When he discovered that David was

in hiding at Mademoiselle Clerget's, the Parisian changed his plans with regard to Henriette, but without changing his conduct; for he proposed to turn to his own advantage the sort of frenzy that assails a girl when there is no way to hide her dishonor, save to marry her seducer. During the morning of the day on which Lucien was to reconquer his Louise, Cérizet informed Henriette of Basine's secret and told her that their fortunes and their marriage depended upon discovering the place where David was hidden. Once informed of the main fact, Henriette had no difficulty in deciding that the printer could be nowhere else than in Mademoiselle Clerget's dressing-room; she had no idea that she had done the slightest harm by her spying, but Cérizet had already involved her in his treachery by this slight participation therein.

Lucien was still asleep, when Cérizet, who went to Petit-Claud to learn what the evening had brought forth, sat in the solicitor's private office listening to a recital of the momentous events that were to stir Angoulême to its centre.

"Has Lucien written you anything at all since his return?" asked the Parisian, nodding his head with a satisfied air when Petit-Claud had finished.

"This is all I have had from him," said the solicitor, holding out a note of a few lines which Lucien had written on a sheet of the paper his sister commonly used.

"Very good," said Cérizet; "ten minutes before sunset, let Doublon lie in ambush at Porte Palet, let

him keep his gendarmes out of sight and be ready for action, and you shall have your man."

"Are you sure of *your* part of it?" said Petit-Claud, scrutinizing Cérizet closely.

"I trust to luck," said the ex-gamin of Paris, "but luck's a proud rascal, he doesn't like honest men."

"You must be successful," said the solicitor, dryly.

"I shall be successful," said Cérizet. "It was you who pushed me into this heap of filth and you can certainly give me a few bank notes to wipe my clothes with. But, monsieur," added the Parisian, surprising on the solicitor's face an expression he did not like, "if you have deceived me, if you don't buy the printing-office for me within a week, why, you'll leave a young widow," said the Arab in a low tone, with death in his glance.

"If we have David under lock and key at six o'clock, be at Monsieur Gannerac's at nine, and we'll settle your business," rejoined the solicitor, peremptorily.

"Agreed: you shall be well served, *boss!*" said Cérizet.

Cérizet was already familiar with the branch of industry that consists in washing ink from paper, and that to-day endangers the well-being of the treasury. He washed out the four lines written by Lucien and replaced them with the following, imitating the handwriting with an accuracy most ominous for the proof-reader's social future!

"MY DEAR DAVID,

"You can come to the prefect's without fear, your affair is settled; in any event, you can come out at this time of day, and I will come and meet you to explain how you are to conduct yourself with the prefect.

"Your brother,

"LUCIEN."

At noon, Lucien wrote David a letter in which he described his success of the previous evening and assured him of the patronage of the prefect, who, he said, was even then writing a report to the minister concerning the invention, over which he was most enthusiastic. Just as Marion brought that letter to Mademoiselle Basine on the pretext of giving her Lucien's shirts to be laundered, Cérizet, advised by Petit-Claud that such a letter would probably be written, called and took Mademoiselle Signol out to walk on the bank of the Charente. There was doubtless a struggle in which Henriette's honesty held out for a long while, for the walk lasted two hours. Not only was the interest of her unborn child at stake, but a whole happy future, a fortune; and what Cérizet asked was a mere trifle, of which he was very careful not to tell her the consequences. But the exorbitant value placed upon such trifles frightened Henriette. However Cérizet finally induced his mistress to lend her aid to his stratagem. At five o'clock, Henriette was to go out and return at once, saying that Madame Séchard desired to see Mademoiselle Clerget instantly. Then, a quarter of an hour after Basine had gone, she was to go up-

stairs, knock at the dressing-room door and hand David the forged letter from Lucien. After that, Cérizet trusted to chance.

For the first time for more than a year, Ève was conscious of a relaxation of the iron grasp of necessity. At last she had some hope. She too desired to enjoy her brother's society, to show herself on the arm of the man who was made so much of in his native province, adored by the women, loved by the haughty Comtesse du Châtelet. She arrayed herself in her best and proposed to her brother to walk to Beaulieu after dinner. At that hour, in the month of September, all Angoulême flocks thither to take the air.

"Oh! there's lovely Madame Séchard," said some voices, when Ève appeared.

"I would never have believed this of her," said one lady.

"The husband hides and the wife puts herself on exhibition," said Madame Postel in a loud enough tone for the poor woman to hear.

"Oh! let us go back, I was wrong," said Ève to her brother.

A few moments before sunset, the uproar caused by the assembling of a crowd arose in the direction of the steps leading to L'Houmeau. Lucien and his sister, impelled by curiosity, walked in that direction, for they heard some persons coming from L'Houmeau talking to one another as if some crime had been committed.

"It's probably some thief who has been arrested.

He's as pale as a dead man," said a passer-by to the brother and sister, seeing that they were hurrying toward the constantly increasing crowd.

Neither Lucien nor his sister had the slightest apprehension. They looked at the two score or more children and old women, and the workmen returning from their work who walked in front of the gendarmes, whose hats, embroidered with gold lace, shone resplendent in the centre of the principal group. That group, followed by a crowd of about a hundred persons, came on like a storm cloud.

"Oh!" cried Ève, "it's my husband!"

"David!" exclaimed Lucien.

"It's his wife!" shouted the crowd, standing aside.

"What can have induced you to come out?" asked Lucien.

"Your letter," replied David, pallid and wan.

"I was sure of it," said Ève, and she fell to the ground unconscious.

Lucien raised his sister, whom two bystanders assisted him to carry to her home, where Marion put her to bed. Kolb hurried away to find a doctor. When the doctor arrived, Ève had not recovered consciousness, Lucien was thereupon compelled to confess to his mother that he was the cause of David's arrest, for he could not explain the confusion caused by the false letter. Completely crushed by a glance from his mother, who cursed him with her eyes, he went up to his room and locked himself in.

Upon reading this letter, written in the middle of the night and interrupted from moment to moment, everyone will understand from the short, disjointed sentences, the intense agitation under which Lucien was laboring:

"MY BELOVED SISTER,

"We parted just now for the last time. My resolution is irrevocable. This is why! In many families there is one fatal member, who is like a disease afflicting the whole family. In our family, I am that member. This observation is not my own, but a man's who has seen much of the world. We were supping one evening, among *friends*, at the *Rocher de Cancale*. Among the thousand and one jests exchanged on that occasion, the diplomatist in question told us that a certain young girl whose failure to marry was a matter of surprise to everybody, was *sick of her father*. And thereupon he developed his theory of family diseases. He explained to us how a certain family would have prospered except for its mother, how a certain son had ruined his father, how a certain father had wrecked the good name and the future of his children. Although put forward laughingly, that social thesis was in ten minutes supported by so many examples, that I was deeply impressed by it. That truth made up for all the absurd but cleverly demonstrated paradoxes by which journalists entertain one another, when there is no outsider present to be

mystified. Well, I am the fatal member of our family. With a heart running over with affection, I act like an enemy. I have repaid all your devotion with injury. Although dealt involuntarily, the last blow is the most cruel of all. While I was in Paris, leading a life devoid of dignity, filled with pleasure and misery, mistaking good-fellowship for friendship, abandoning true friends for men whose only wish and purpose was to make what they could out of me, forgetful of you, or remembering you only to bring fresh trouble upon you, you were following the humble pathway of toil, progressing with painful steps but surely toward the fortune that I madly tried to seize without toil. While you were growing better, I was bringing a deplorable element into my life. Yes, I have immeasurable ambition, which prevents my accepting a humble life with resignation. I have tastes and pleasures, the memory of which poisons such enjoyments as are within my reach and which would once have satisfied me. O my dear Eve, I judge myself more severely than anyone else can do, for I condemn myself absolutely and pitilessly. The constant struggle in Paris demands constant strength, and my will works only by fits and starts; my brain-power is intermittent. The future is so terrifying to me, that I want no future, and the present is unendurable. I longed to see you once more, I should have done better to expatriate myself forever. But expatriation, without means of support, would be madness, and I will not add that to all the others. Death seems to me preferable to an incomplete life; and in whatever position I can imagine myself, my vanity would lead me to do foolish things. Certain mortals are like zeroes, they require another figure to precede them and then their nullity acquires tenfold value. I can acquire value only by marriage with a strong, pitiless will. Madame de Bargeton was the wife for me, and I missed the chance of my life in not abandoning Coralie for her. David and you are excellent pilots for me, but you are not strong enough to conquer my weakness, which has a way of eluding domination. I love an easy life, with nothing to annoy me; and in order to rid myself of

anything that does annoy me, I am capable of base conduct that may carry me very far. I was born to be a prince. I have more dexterity of mind than is essential to success, but I have it only for a moment at a time, and the prize in a race run by so many ambitious men is to him who exerts only what is necessary and finds himself still well supplied at the end of the day. I should do harm, as I have just done here, with the best intentions imaginable. There are men-oaks, I am perhaps nothing more than a graceful shrub and I claim to be a cedar. That is my balance-sheet. The discrepancy between my means and my desires, the lack of equilibrium will always nullify my efforts. There are many such characters among men of letters, because of the constant disproportion between intellect and character, between will-power and desire. What would be my destiny? I can see it in anticipation as I remember some old Parisian celebrities that I have seen forgotten. On the threshold of old age, I shall be older than my years and without fortune and esteem. All my present being repels the thought of such an old age: I do not choose to be a social rag. Dear sister, adored as truly for your late severity as for your former gentleness, even if we have paid dear for my pleasure in seeing you and David once more, perhaps you will think, hereafter, that no price was too high for the last joy of a poor wretch who loved you! Make no attempt to find me or to learn my fate: at all events, my wit will be of service to me in carrying out my purpose. Resignation, my angel, is a daily suicide; I have only resignation enough for one day and I propose to make the most of it to-day.

"*Two o'clock.*

"Yes, my mind is made up. And so, adieu forever, my dear Ève. I find some pleasure in the thought that I shall live only in your hearts. There will be my grave. I wish no other. Once more, adieu!—It is the last word of your brother

"LUCIEN.

Having written this letter, Lucien crept noiselessly downstairs, laid it on his nephew's cradle, deposited a last kiss moistened with tears on his sister's brow, and left the room. He extinguished his candle as the day was breaking, and, having looked about the old house for the last time, opened the hall door very softly; but, despite his precautions, he awakened Kolb, who slept on a mattress on the workroom floor.

"*Who goes dare?*" cried Kolb.

"I," said Lucien, "I am going away, Kolb."

"*You vould haf done pedder to neffer gome,*" said Kolb to himself, but loud enough for Lucien to hear.

"I should have done better never to come into the world," he replied. "Adieu, Kolb, I bear you no ill-will for a thought that is in my own mind. Tell David that my last words were of regret that I could not embrace him."

Before the Alsatian was on his feet and dressed, Lucien had closed the outer door and was walking down toward the Charente by way of the Beaulieu promenade, but as if he were on his way to a fête, for he had made his shroud of his Parisian clothes and his pretty dandy's outfit. Impressed by Lucien's tone and by his last words, Kolb thought of going to find out if his mistress knew of her brother's departure, and if he had bade her adieu; but finding that the house was buried in silence, he concluded that it was undoubtedly all understood, and he went back to bed.

Very little has been written on the subject of sui-

cide in proportion to its gravity, and little attention has been paid to it. It may be that the malady is not capable of being observed. Suicide is the result of a sentiment which we will call, if you please, *self-esteem*, in order not to confound it with *honor*. On the day that a man despises himself, on the day that he finds himself despised by others, on the day that the reality of life fails to accord with his hopes, he kills himself and thus does homage to society, unable to remain before it, shorn of his virtues or his splendor. Whatever one may say of them, among atheists—the Christian must be excepted in discussing suicide—only cowards accept a dishonored life. Suicide is of three kinds: first, there is the suicide which is only the last paroxysm of a long illness and which certainly lies within the domain of pathology; secondly, the suicide from despair; lastly, the suicide from reasoning. Lucien proposed to kill himself from despair and from reasoning, the two kinds of suicide from which one can draw back; for the pathological suicide is the only irrevocable form; but frequently the three causes are combined, as in the case of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Lucien, when his resolution was once taken, began to consider the means of carrying it out, and, being a poet, he determined to end his days poetically. He had at first thought of simply throwing himself into the Charente; but, as he descended the Beaulieu steps for the last time, he seemed to hear beforehand the uproar that his suicide would cause, to see the ghastly spectacle of his body taken

from the water deformed and made the subject of a judicial inquiry; like many suicides, he developed a posthumous self-respect. During the day he passed at Courtois's mill, he had walked along the stream and had noticed, not far from the mill, one of the round pools sometimes found in small streams, whose great depth is attested by the calmness of the surface. The water is neither green nor blue nor yellow, nor transparent; it is like a mirror of polished steel. On the banks of this pool were no bright flowers, no flags, no broad-leaved water-lilies; the grass on its brink was short and close and weeping willows drooped over the water—a most picturesque spot. One readily divined a deep abyss filled with water. The man who had the courage to fill his pockets with stones would inevitably find death there, and his body would never be recovered.

"That," said the poet to himself as he gazed admiringly at the charming landscape, "is a spot that makes one's mouth water to be drowned there."

That thought recurred to his mind as he reached L'Houmeau. And so he took the Marsac road, absorbed in his last gloomy thoughts, with the firm intention of concealing his death in that way, in order that he might not be the subject of an inquest, that he might not be buried, and that he might not be seen in the horrible condition of a drowned man when he returns to the surface. He soon reached one of the hills which are so frequently met with on French highways, especially between Angoulême and Poitiers. The diligence from Bordeaux to Paris

was coming up rapidly behind him and the passengers would undoubtedly alight to walk up the long hill. Lucien, not wishing to be seen, turned into a narrow crossroad, and began to pick flowers from a vine. When he returned to the main road he held in his hand a large bunch of *sedum*, a yellow flower that grows among the stones in vineyards; he came out just behind a traveller dressed entirely in black, with shoes of Orléans kid with silver buckles, powdered hair, dark complexion, and a face scarred as if he had fallen into the fire in his childhood. This gentleman, of an evidently ecclesiastical cut, was walking slowly and smoking a cigar. When he heard Lucien emerging from among the vines upon the highway, the stranger turned and seemed struck by the profoundly melancholy beauty of the poet, his symbolical nosegay and his fashionable attire. The traveller's expression resembled that of a hunter who has found a quarry he has long and vainly sought. He slackened his pace, sailor-fashion, to allow Lucien to overtake him, pretending to be looking back at the foot of the hill. Lucien, following his glance, saw a small calèche drawn by two horses, and a postilion walking beside it.

"You have allowed the diligence to go on, monsieur, you will lose your place unless you will accept a seat in my calèche to overtake it, for post horses travel faster than public conveyances," said the traveller to Lucien with a very marked Spanish accent and an exquisitely courteous manner.

Without awaiting a reply, the Spaniard took a

cigar-case from his pocket and offered it open to Lucien for him to take one.

"I am not a traveller," said Lucien, "and I am too near the end of my course to indulge in smoking!"

"You are very hard upon yourself," rejoined the Spaniard. "Although an honorary canon of the cathedral of Toledo, I enjoy a little cigar from time to time. God gave us tobacco to lull our passions and sorrows to sleep. You seem to me to be unhappy, at all events, you have the symbol of unhappiness in your hand like the melancholy god Hymen. Come, all your troubles will vanish with the smoke.

And the priest alluringly held out the straw case once more, looking at Lucien with a kindly, sympathetic expression.

"Pardon me, father," rejoined Lucien, bitterly, "there are no cigars strong enough to banish my unhappiness."

As he spoke, his eyes were wet with tears.

"Ah! young man, was it divine Providence that impelled me to shake off with a little exercise on foot the somnolent feeling that oppresses all travellers in the morning, so that I might fulfil my mission here on earth by consoling you? What great sorrows can you have at your age?"

"Your consolation, father, would be of no avail: you are a Spaniard, I am a Frenchman; you believe in the precepts of the Church, I am an atheist."

"*Santa Virgen del Pilar!* you an atheist!" cried

the priest, passing his arm through Lucien's with motherly warmth. "Well, well! here is one of the curiosities I promised myself that I would examine in Paris. In Spain we don't believe in atheists. Nowhere but in France can a youth of nineteen hold such opinions."

"Oh! I am an atheist through and through; I believe neither in God, nor in society, nor in happiness. Look at me well, father; for in a few hours I shall be no more. This is my last sunlight!" he added emphatically, pointing to the sky.

"Nonsense! what have you done that you should die? who condemned you to death?"

"A sovereign tribunal, myself!"

"Child!" cried the priest. "Have you killed a man? Does the scaffold await you? Let us reason a bit. If, as you say, you propose to return to oblivion, everything on earth must be indifferent to you?"

Lucien bowed in token of assent.

"Very well, then you can tell me your troubles, can't you? Doubtless, some little love affair is going badly, eh?"

Lucien shrugged his shoulders in a very significant way.

"Do you intend to kill yourself to avoid dishonor, or because you are in despair over your life? Very good, you can kill yourself as well at Poitiers as at Angoulême, at Tours as at Poitiers. The shifting sands of the Loire do not yield up their prey."

"No, father," Lucien replied, "I know what I

am about. Three weeks ago I saw the loveliest roadstead from which a man disgusted with this world can set sail for the other."

"The other world? You're not an atheist."

"Oh! what I mean by the other world is my future transformation into an animal or a plant."

"Have you an incurable disease?"

"Yes, father."

"Ah! now we come to it," said the priest; "what is it?"

"Poverty."

The priest looked at Lucien and said to him with infinite grace and a smile that was almost ironical:

"The diamond doesn't know its value."

"No one but a priest would flatter a poor man who is determined to die," said Lucien.

"You shall not die!" said the Spaniard authoritatively.

"I have heard," retorted Lucien, "that people were sometimes robbed on the highroads, but I didn't know they were ever enriched."

"You shall know it," said the priest, after looking back to see if the carriage was far enough away to enable them to walk a little farther alone. "Listen to me," he continued, chewing his cigar, "your poverty is no reason for dying. I need a secretary, mine died recently at Barcelona. I find myself in the position of the Baron de Goërtz, Charles the Twelfth's famous minister, who arrived without a secretary at a small city on his way to Sweden, as I am on my way to Paris. The baron

fell in with a goldsmith's son remarkable for his beauty, which certainly could not have been equal to yours. The Baron de Goërtz divined a fine intellect in that young man, as I divine a poetic temperament in you from your brow; he took him in his carriage, as I am going to take you in mine, and that child, doomed to burnish silver plate and make gewgaws in a little provincial town like Angoulême, he made his favorite, as you shall be mine. When they arrived at Stockholm, he installed his secretary in office and overwhelmed him with work. The young secretary passed his nights writing; and, like all great workers, he contracted a habit, he fell into the way of chewing paper. The late Monsieur de Malesherbes used to blow smoke in people's faces, and he did it one day, by the way, to some great man or other who had a lawsuit depending on his report. Our handsome youth began with white paper, but he got tired of that and passed to written papers which he found more savory. People didn't smoke in those days as they do to-day. At last the little secretary, going from delicacy to delicacy, reached a point where he chewed parchments and ate them. Negotiations were then in progress for a treaty of peace between Russia and Sweden, forced upon Charles XII. by the States of Sweden, just as an attempt was made to force Napoléon to negotiate in 1814. The basis of the negotiations was the treaty already made between the two powers on the subject of Finland. Goërtz entrusted the original to his secretary, but when it became necessary to sub-

mit the project to the States, this little difficulty arose—the treaty could not be found. The States imagined that the minister had thought best to destroy the document to gratify the King's passions; the Baron de Goërtz was accused of it, whereupon his secretary confessed that he had eaten the treaty. He was prosecuted, the fact was established and the secretary was condemned to death. But, as that's not your case, take a cigar and smoke while we wait for the calèche."

Lucien took a cigar and lighted it, as they do in Spain, from the priest's, saying to himself:

"He is right. I can kill myself at any time."

"It often happens that a young man's fortune begins just when he is most despondent concerning his future. That is what I wanted to say to you, and I preferred to prove it by an example. The handsome secretary, condemned to death, was in a most desperate plight, particularly because the King of Sweden could not pardon him, the sentence having been imposed by the States of Sweden; but he closed his eyes to a project of escape. The pretty little secretary made his escape on a vessel with a few crowns in his pocket, and reached the court of Courland, armed with a letter of recommendation from Goërtz to the duke, to whom the Swedish minister described his protégé's adventure and his mania. The duke made the boy secretary to his intendant. The duke was dissipated, he had a pretty wife and an intendant, three causes of disaster. If you suppose that the young man, after being condemned to death for

eating up the treaty relative to Finland, broke himself of his depraved taste, you do not realize the hold vice takes upon a man; the death penalty doesn't stop him when it is a question of a pleasure he has invented for himself. What is the explanation of this power of vice? is it a force inherent in vice itself, or does it come from human weakness? Are there tastes that verge on madness? I cannot help laughing at the moralists who try to fight such diseases with fine phrases! A time came when the duke, dismayed by his intendant's refusal to comply with his request for money, called for an accounting —the merest folly! There is nothing easier than to draw up an account; the difficulty is never there. The intendant handed all his papers to his secretary to draw up a balance sheet of the civil list of Courland. As he was hard at work in the middle of the night that was to see the task completed, the little paper-eater discovered that he was chewing away on a receipt from the duke for a considerable sum; he was terror-stricken, he stopped half way through the signature, ran and threw himself at the duchess's feet, told her of his mania and implored his sovereign's protection—and all in the middle of the night. The young clerk's beauty made such an impression on the duchess, that she married him when she became a widow. Thus, in the middle of the 18th century, in a country where heraldry reigned supreme, a goldsmith's son became a sovereign prince. He became something better! He was Regent after the death of the first Cather-

ine, he governed the Empress Anne and tried to be the Richelieu of Russia. And now, young man, understand this one thing: although you are handsomer than Biron, I, although a simple canon, am a much greater man than the Baron de Goërtz. So, get aboard! we will find you a Duchy of Courland at Paris, and, in default of the duchy, we will have the duchess."

The Spaniard put his hand through Lucien's arm and literally compelled him to enter his carriage, and the postilion closed the door.

"Now, say on, I am listening," said the canon of Toledo to the stupefied Lucien. "I am an old priest to whom you can safely say anything. Probably you have as yet run through only your patrimony or your mamma's money. We shall have got clear away, and we are all honor to the toes of our pretty little kid boots. Come, confess fearlessly, it will be precisely as if you were talking to yourself."

Lucien found himself in the situation of the fisherman in some Arabian tale, who, seeking to drown himself in mid-ocean, landed in a submarine country and there became king. The Spanish priest's interest seemed so genuine and affectionate that the poet did not hesitate to open his heart to him, and between Angoulême and Ruffec he told him the whole story of his life, omitting none of his faults and concluding with the latest disaster of which he had been the cause. Just as he finished his narrative, which he delivered with all the more poetic

expression as it was the third time he had repeated it within a fortnight, they were passing near Ruffec, the estates of the Rastignac family, at the first mention of whose name by Lucien, the Spaniard started.

"Here," said Lucien, "is where young Rastignac was born, who is certainly not so much of a man as I, and yet he has been much more fortunate."

"Ah!"

"Yes, this wretched little country seat is his father's house. He has become, as I was saying, the lover of Madame de Nucingen, wife of the famous banker. I chose the path of poetry; he, wiser than I, chose something more positive."

The priest ordered the postilion to stop, he desired, from curiosity, to walk along the little avenue leading from the road to the house, and he looked at everything with more interest than Lucien expected from a Spanish priest.

"Do you know the Rastignacs?" Lucien asked him.

"I know all Paris," said the Spaniard, returning to the carriage. "And so, for lack of ten or twelve thousand francs, you proposed to kill yourself. You are a child, you know nothing of men or things. A destiny is worth whatever value a man puts upon it, and you value your future at only twelve thousand francs; very good, I will give you more than that for it directly. As for your brother-in-law's imprisonment, that's a mere trifle. If dear Monsieur Séchard has made a discovery, he will be rich.

The rich are never imprisoned for debt. You don't seem to be very strong in history. There are two histories: the official, lying history, which is taught in schools, history *ad usum Delphini;* and the secret history, in which the real causes of events are set forth—a shameful history. Let me tell you in three words, another little story that you don't know. A priest, young and ambitious, wishes to have a share in public affairs, so he makes himself the fawning cur of a favorite, a queen's favorite; the favorite becomes interested in the priest and gives him a seat in the council with the rank of minister. One evening, one of those men who think they are doing you a favor—never offer to do a favor that you're not asked to do!—writes to the ambitious youth that his benefactor's life is in danger. The king was enraged at having a master and the favorite was to be killed the next day if he should come to the palace. Now, young man, what would you have done on receipt of such a letter?"

"I would have gone at once to warn my benefactor," cried Lucien quickly.

"You are still the child that the story of your life indicates," said the priest. "Our man said to himself: 'If the king resorts to crime, my benefactor is lost; I must say I received the letter too late!' And he slept until the hour when the favorite was to be killed."

"He was a monster!" said Lucien, who suspected that the priest was testing him.

"All great men are monsters; that particular one

was called Cardinal de Richelieu," replied the canon, "and his benefactor was Maréchal d'Ancre. You see that you don't know your French history. Was I not right when I told you that the HISTORY taught in schools is a collection of dates and facts, in the first place of exceedingly doubtful authenticity, and of not the slightest consequence? What good does it do you to know that Jeanne d'Arc once lived? Have you ever drawn from it the conclusion that, if France had at that time accepted the Angevin dynasty of the Plantagenets, the two nations united would to-day possess the empire of the world, and that the two islands in which the political troubles of the continent are forged, would be two French provinces? Have you ever studied the methods by which the Medicis rose from simple merchants to be Grand Dukes of Tuscany?"

"A poet in France isn't expected to be a Benedictine monk," said Lucien.

"Well, young man, they became grand dukes as Richelieu became a minister. If you had sought in history the human causes for events, instead of learning their labels by heart, you would have drawn from them precepts to govern your conduct. The result of what I have learned by running at random through the collection of undoubted facts is this law! Look upon mankind, especially women, simply as instruments: but don't let them see it. Adore like God Himself the man who, occupying a higher place than you, may be of service to you and do not leave him until he has paid

dear for your servility. In short, in dealing with the world, be as sharp as the Jew and as mean-spirited; do, to gain power, all that he does to gain money. Furthermore, have no more thought for the man who falls than if he had never existed. Do you know why you should act thus? You wish to dominate society, do you not? you must begin by obeying it and studying it carefully. Scholars study books, politicians study men, their interests, the primary motives of their acts. Now, the world, society, men taken as a whole are fatalists; they adore the event. Do you know why I am giving you this little course in history? it is because I believe you to have an immeasurable ambition—"

"Yes, father."

"I knew it," continued the canon. "But at this moment you are saying to yourself: 'This Spanish canon is inventing anecdotes and forcing history to prove to me that I have been too virtuous.'"

Lucien began to smile, when he found his thoughts so accurately divined.

"Well, young man, let us take some historical facts that every schoolboy knows," said the priest. "One day France was almost conquered by the English, the king had but one province left. From the bosom of the people two beings came forth: a poor girl, the same Jeanne d'Arc of whom we were just speaking, then a bourgeois named Jacques Cœur. One gave her arm and the prestige of her virginity, the other gave his gold: the kingdom was saved. But the maid was taken! The king, who

might have ransomed the maid, allowed her to be burned alive. As for the heroic bourgeois, the king allowed him to be charged with capital crimes by his courtiers, who seized upon all his property. The spoils of the innocent man, who was hunted down, surrounded and crushed in the name of the law, enriched five noble families. And the father of the Archbishop of Bourges left the kingdom, never to return, without a sou of the property he had owned in France, and with no money save what he had entrusted to the Arabs and Saracens in Egypt. Again you may say: 'These examples are old, all these instances of ingratitude have been used for three hundred years, and skeletons of that age are fabulous.' Very good, young man, do you believe in the latest demigod of France, Napoléon? He kept one of his generals in disgrace, made him a marshal sorely against his will and never willingly availed himself of his services. That marshal's name was Kellermann. Do you know why it was? —Kellermann saved France and the First Consul at Marengo by a bold charge that was applauded in the midst of the fire and slaughter. That heroic charge was not mentioned in the bulletin. The cause of Napoléon's coldness to Kellermann was the cause of the disgrace of Fouché, of the Prince de Talleyrand: it was the ingratitude of Charles VII., of Richelieu, the ingratitude——"

"But, father, assuming that you save my life and make my fortune, you make gratitude a very easy matter for me."

"Little rascal," said the abbé with a smile, taking Lucien's ear and pulling it with quasi-royal familiarity, "if you should be ungrateful to me, then you would be a strong man and I should bow before you; but you haven't reached that point yet, for, being a mere scholar, you have tried prematurely to become a master. That's the great fault of the French in our day. They have all been spoiled by the example of Napoléon. You resign because you can't obtain the epaulet you covet. But have you ever referred all your wishes, all your acts, to a single idea?"

"Alas! no," said Lucien.

"You have been what the English call *inconsistent*," continued the canon with a smile.

"What does it matter what I have been if I can no longer be anything?" rejoined Lucien.

"Just let there be behind all your good qualities a force *semper virens*," said the priest, to show that he knew a little Latin, "and nothing in the world can resist you. I am very fond of you already—"

Lucien smiled incredulously.

"Yes," the stranger continued, answering Lucien's smile, "you interest me as if you were my son, and I am powerful enough to speak to you frankly as you have spoken to me. Do you know what I like about you? You have wiped your slate clean, and therefore you can understand a lecture on morality which is never delivered in the schools; for men, assembled in bulk, are even more hypocritical than they are when their interests require

them to play a part. Thus one passes a great part of his life in digging up the weeds one has allowed to spring up in his heart during his youth. That operation is called acquiring experience."

Lucien said to himself, as he listened:

"This is some old politician delighted to have an opportunity to amuse himself on the road. It amuses him to make a poor fellow whom he finds on the verge of suicide change his purpose, and when he has had his jest out he will drop me. But he understands paradox, and he seems to me quite as bright as Blondet or Lousteau."

Despite this sage reflection, the seduction brought to bear on Lucien by the diplomatist entered deep into his mind, by no means disinclined to receive it, and made the greater havoc there because it was supported by illustrious examples. Caught by the fascination of his cynical conversation, Lucien clung the more eagerly to life, feeling that he was raised from the depths of his suicide to the surface by a powerful arm.

Thus far the priest had evidently triumphed. And so, from time to time, his historical sarcasms were accompanied by a cunning smile.

"If your way of dealing with morality resembles your way of looking at history," said Lucien, "I should much like to know the motive of your apparent charity at this moment!"

"That, young man, is the last point of my sermon, and you will permit me to reserve it, for in that case we shall not part to-day," he replied with

the shrewd air of a priest who finds that his stratagem has succeeded.

"Very well, then talk morality to me," rejoined Lucien, saying to himself: "I'll make him show off."

"Morality, young man, begins with the law," said the priest. "If only religion were concerned, laws would be useless: religious peoples have few laws. Above the civil, is the political law. Do you want to know what is written on the brow of your 19th century in the eyes of a politician? In 1793 the French invented a popular sovereignty which ended with an absolute emperor. So much for your national history. As for your morals: Madame Tallien and Madame de Beauharnais behaved in the same way, Napoléon married one and made her your empress, and would never receive the other although she was a princess. A *sans-culotte* in 1793, Napoléon donned the iron crown in 1804. The savage worshippers of *equality or death* of 1792 became in 1806, the accessories of an aristocracy legitimized by Louis XVIII. In the foreigner's eyes, the aristocracy, which sits enthroned to-day in its Faubourg Saint-Germain, has done worse; it has dabbled in usury, it has dabbled in trade, it has made little pies, it has been cook, farmer and shepherd. In France, therefore, both political law and moral law have eventually given the lie to their beginnings, to their opinions by their conduct, or to their conduct by their opinions. There has been no logic in the government or among private individuals. Thus you no longer have any morality.

To-day, success is the supreme motive of all your acts, whatever they may be. The act therefore has ceased to be of any importance in itself. Its importance consists entirely in the idea that others form of it. Thence, young man, I derive my second precept: make a fine show! hide the reverse side of your life and present a very brilliant surface. Discretion, the motto of the ambitious, is the motto of our order, make it yours also. The great commit almost as many base deeds as the lowly; but they commit them in the shadow and make a parade of their virtues: they remain great. The lowly display their virtues in the shade and expose their misery to the bright light of day! they are despised. You have concealed your great qualities and allowed your wounds to be seen. You have had an actress publicly for your mistress, you have lived at her house with her; you were in no way reprehensible, everyone considered you both perfectly free; but you ran full tilt against the prejudices of society and you did not receive the consideration society accords to those who obey its laws. If you had left Coralie with that Monsieur Camusot, if you had concealed your relations with her, you would have married Madame de Bargeton, you would be prefect of Angoulême and Marquis de Rubempré. Change your conduct! display your beauty, your fascinations, your wit, your poesy. If you indulge in little meannesses, let it be between four walls. Then you will not again be guilty of marring the decorations of the great stage

called society. Napoléon calls it *washing one's soiled linen at home*. From the second precept is deduced this corollary: everything depends upon form. Note carefully what I call form. There are unlearned persons who, under the pressure of necessity, take money, no matter how little, from another by violence; they are called criminals and are forced to reckon with the law. A poor man of genius discovers a secret process, the exploitation of which will be worth a fortune; you lend him three thousand francs—like these Cointets, who find your notes for three thousand francs in their hands and proceed to fleece your brother—you torment him until you force him to transfer the whole or half of his invention to you—but you have to reckon only with your conscience and your conscience doesn't drag you before the assizes. The enemies of social order take advantage of this contrast to yelp at the law and to wax wroth in the name of the people because a man who steals chickens at night in an inhabited district is sent to the galleys, whereas a man who ruins whole families by fraudulent bankruptcy is imprisoned for a few months at most; but the hypocrites know very well that by sending the thief to the galleys, the judges uphold the barrier between rich and poor, the overturning of which would mean the end of social order; whereas the bankrupt, the adroit purloiner of inheritances, the banker who slaughters a speculation for his own profit, cause only transfers of wealth. Thus, my son, society is compelled to

make the distinction for its own benefit that I advise you to make for your benefit. The great point is to put one's self on a level with any society. Napoléon, Richelieu, the Medicis put themselves on a level with the times in which they lived. You value yourself at twelve thousand francs! Your society no longer worships the true God, but the golden calf! Such is the religion of your Charter, which makes no account, in politics, of aught but property. Is it not equivalent to saying to all subjects: *Try to be rich?* When, after making a fortune by legitimate means, you are rich and Marquis de Rubempré, you can indulge in the luxury of honor. You can then profess such a delicate sense of honor that no one will dare accuse you of having ever shown yourself lacking in that quality, although you may have shown an entire lack of it while making your fortune, which I shall never advise you to do," said the priest, taking Lucien's hand and patting it. "What must you put in that beautiful head? Simply this rule of action! To aim at a glorious goal and to conceal your method of attaining it, even while you conceal your progress. You have acted like a child, be a man, be a hunter, be always on the watch, lie in ambush in Parisian society, wait for a victim and an opportunity, spare neither your person nor what is called dignity; for we all obey something, a vice, a necessity; but observe the supreme law—secrecy!"

"You frighten me, father!" cried Lucien. "That seems to me a highwayman's system."

"You are right," said the canon, "but I am not its author. That is how upstarts have reasoned, the house of Austria as well as the house of France. You have nothing, you are in the position of the Medicis, of Richelieu, of Napoléon, at the outset of their careers. Those men, my boy, valued their future at the price of ingratitude, treachery, and the most violent opposition. One must venture all to have all. Let us see. When you sit down at a *bouillotte* table, do you discuss the conditions of the game? The rules are there and you accept them."

"Well, well," thought Lucien, "he knows *bouillotte!*"

"How do you conduct yourself at the game?" queried the priest. "Do you practise the sweetest of all virtues, frankness? Not only do you conceal your cards, but, when you feel certain of winning you try to make your adversaries believe that you expect to lose everything. In short, you dissemble, don't you? You lie to win five louis! What would you say to a gambler foolish enough to tell the others that he has *brelan carré?* Very good, the ambitious man who tries to fight his way with virtuous precepts, in a career in which his antagonists cast them aside, is a child to whom old politicians would say what gamblers say to him who doesn't make the most of his cards: 'Monsieur, never play *bouillotte!*' Do you make the rules in the game of ambition? Why did I tell you to put yourself on the level of society? Because, young man, to-day,

society has insensibly arrogated to itself so many rights over the individual that the individual finds himself obliged to fight society. There are no laws, there are only customs, that is to say, grimaces,—always form."

Lucien made a gesture of surprise.

"Ah! my child," continued the priest, fearing that he had offended Lucien's innocence, "could you expect to find the angel Gabriel in an abbe laden with all the iniquities of the counter-diplomacy of two great kings? for I am the intermediary between Ferdinand VII. and Louis XVIII., two great—kings, both of whom owe their crowns to deep—combinations. I believe in God, but I believe much more firmly in our order, and our order believes only in the temporal power. To make the temporal power very strong, our order maintains the Apostolic, Catholic, Roman Church, that is to say, the whole body of the sentiments that hold the people in a state of submission. We are the modern templars, we have a doctrine. Like the Temple, our order was shattered, and for the same reason: it had placed itself on the level of society. If you wish to be a soldier, I will be your captain. Obey me as a woman obeys her husband, as a child obeys its mother, and I will promise that in less than three years you shall be Marquis de Rubempré, you shall marry one of the noblest young women in Faubourg Saint-Germain, and some day you shall sit on the benches of the peerage. At this moment, if I had not entertained you with my conversation, what

would you be? a corpse lost in a deep bed of mud; well, set your poetic mind at work!"

At that, Lucien glanced curiously at his protector.

"The young man now sitting here, in this calèche, beside Abbé Carlos Herrera, honorary canon of the chapter of Toledo, secret envoy from His Majesty Ferdinand VII. to His Majesty the King of France, and bearer of a despatch wherein he says to him, perhaps: *When you have set me free, hang all those whom I am smiling upon at this moment, and especially my messenger so that he may be secret, in very truth*—that young man," said the abbé, "has nothing in common with the poet who is dead. I fished you up, I restored you to life, and you belong to me, as the creature to the creator, as the afreet in fairy tales to the genie, as the page to the sultan, as the body to the soul! I will sustain you with a powerful hand on the road to power, and I promise you, none the less, a life of pleasures, of honors, of constant fêtes.—You shall never lack money. You shall shine, you shall make a brave show, while I, crouching in the mud of the foundations, strengthen the glorious edifice of your fortune. I love power for power's sake! I shall always be happy in your pleasures, which are forbidden me. In short, I will make myself you! And when this pact between man and demon, between child and diplomatist, shall cease to content you, why then you can always go and find some little pool, like that you were speaking of, in which to drown yourself; you will be a

little more or a little less than you are to-day, unfortunate or dishonored."

"That doesn't sound like a homily from the Archbishop of Grenada!" cried Lucien as the calèche stopped at a posting-house.

"I don't know what name you give to this summary education, my son,—for I adopt you and will make you my heir—but it is the code of ambition. The elect of God are few in number. There is no other alternative: one must either bury one's self in a cloister—and you will often find society there on a small scale—or one must accept this code."

"Perhaps it is better not to know so much," said Lucien, trying to probe the thoughts of this awe-inspiring priest.

"What!" rejoined the canon, "after playing for a long while without knowing the rules of the game, you will throw up your hand just as you are becoming a strong player, just as you are provided with a substantial sponsor—and without the slightest desire to have your revenge? What! do you not long to ride on the backs of the people who drove you out of Paris?"

Lucien shuddered as if some brass instrument, a Chinese gong, had produced these terrifying sounds that rang upon his nerves.

"I am only a humble priest," the man continued, with a horrible expression upon his face, bronzed by the sun of Spain; "but, if men had humiliated, annoyed, tortured, betrayed and sold me,

as those rascals you told me of did you, I should be like the Arab of the desert! Yes, I would consume my body and my soul to be revenged. I would snap my fingers at ending my days hanging from a gallows, seated at the *garrote*, empaled or guillotined as the fashion is among you; but my head should not be taken until I had crushed my enemies under my heel."

Lucien held his peace; he had no further desire to make the priest show off.

"Some descend from Abel, others from Cain," the canon concluded; "I am of mixed blood: Cain to my enemies, Abel to my friends; and woe to him who arouses Cain! After all, you are a Frenchman and I am a Spaniard, and, what is more, a canon!"

"What an Arab nature!" said Lucien to himself as he scrutinized the protector that heaven had sent him.

There was nothing about the Abbé Carlos Herrera to denote the Jesuit, or even the monk. Short and stout, with large hands, a broad chest, herculean strength, and a terrible glance, softened, however, by a kindly expression that was made to order; a bronzed complexion which allowed nothing to pass out—everything about him tended to inspire repulsion far more than attachment. Beautiful long hair, powdered and worn in the style adopted by Prince de Talleyrand, gave to that sinister figure the appearance of a bishop, and the blue ribbon with narrow white border, from which hung a golden cross,

also denoted an ecclesiastical dignitary. His black silk stockings were moulds for the legs of an athlete. His clothes, which were exquisitely neat, indicated that painstaking care of the person which simple priests do not always bestow upon themselves, especially in Spain. A three-cornered hat lay on the front seat of the carriage, which bore the arms of Spain on the doors. Despite the numerous causes of repulsion, manners at once violent and cajoling diminished the effect of his features; and for Lucien's benefit the priest had evidently taken pains to assume a coquettish, caressing, almost cat-like manner.

Lucien observed the smallest details with an anxious expression. He felt that it was a question with him of life or death, for they were at the second relay-station beyond Ruffec. The Spanish priest's last words had stirred many chords in his heart: and—let it be said to the shame of Lucien and the priest, who was studying with penetrating eye the poet's beautiful face—they were the worst chords, those that vibrate beneath the attack of depraved sentiments. Lucien would see Paris once more, he would seize the reins of domination that his unskilful hands had dropped, he would be revenged! The comparison he had made between life in the provinces and in Paris, the most active of all the causes of his projected suicide, disappeared; he was about to stand once more in his proper element, but protected by craft so deep that it was on the level of Cromwell's villainy.

"I was alone, we shall be two," he said to himself.

The more errors he had disclosed in his former conduct, the more interest the ecclesiastic had manifested in him. The man's charity had increased in proportion to his misfortunes, and he seemed surprised at nothing. Nevertheless, Lucien wondered what the motive could be of this conductor of royal intrigues. He contented himself at first with a commonplace reason: Spaniards are generous! The Spaniard is generous as the Italian is jealous and a poisoner, as the Frenchman is fickle, as the German is frank, as the Jew is despicable, as the Englishman is noble. Reverse these propositions and you will reach the truth. The Jews have monopolized gold, they write *Robert le Diable,* they play *Phédre,* they sing *Wilhelm Tell,* they order pictures, they build palaces, they write *Reisebilder* and beautiful poems, they are more powerful than ever, their religion is accepted, and lastly they lend money to the Pope! In Germany for the slightest thing a stranger is asked: "Have you a contract?" there is so much rascality there. In France the national stupidity has been applauded on the stage for fifty years past, the people still wear incomprehensible hats, the government changes only on condition of remaining always the same! England displays in the face of the world a perfidy, the horror of which can be compared only to her avidity. The Spaniard, having once had all the gold from both Indies, now has nothing. There is no country on earth where

there are less poisonings than in Italy, or where the manners of the people are more easy and courteous. The Spaniards have traded a great deal on the reputation of the Moors.

When the Spaniard returned to the calèche, he said in the postilion's ear:

"I must go at full speed; there will be three francs for you."

Lucien hesitated about entering, but the priest said:

"Come on!"

And Lucien entered the carriage on the pretext of discharging an *argumentum ad hominem*.

"Father," he began, "a man who enunciates with the most admirable *sang-froid*, maxims which many bourgeois would denounce as profoundly immoral——"

"And which are so," interposed the priest; "that is why Jesus Christ wished scandal to take place, my son; and that is why the world manifests such profound horror at scandal."

"A man of your temper will not be surprised at the question I am going to ask you?"

"Go on, my son!" said Carlos Herrera, "you don't know me. Do you suppose I would take a secretary before finding out if his principles were such that he would steal nothing from me? I am content with you. You still have all the innocent qualities of the man who kills himself at twenty. Your question?"

"Why are you interested in me? What price

do you require for my obedience? Why do you give me everything? What is your share?"

The Spaniard glanced at him and smiled.

"Wait until we come to a hill," he said; "we will walk up and then we can talk freely. The back seat of a calèche is unreliable."

Silence reigned between them for some time, and the rapidity with which they were travelling accelerated Lucien's moral drunkenness, if we may call it so.

"Here's a hill, father," said Lucien, arousing himself as if from a dream!

"Very well, let us walk," said the priest, shouting to the postilion to stop.

They both stepped out upon the road.

"Child," said the Spaniard, taking Lucien's arm, "have you ever meditated upon Otway's *Venice Preserved?* do you understand that deep-rooted friendship between man and man, that binds Pierre to Jaffier, that makes a woman a mere trifle in their eyes, and changes all the social relations as between them?—Well, so much for the poet."

"The canon also knows the stage," said Lucien to himself.—"Have you read Voltaire?" he asked.

"I have done better," was the reply, "I put him in practice."

"You do not believe in God?"

"Ah! so I am the atheist!" said the priest with a smile. "Let us come down to business, my boy," he added, putting his arm about Lucien's waist. "I am forty-six years old, I am the natural

child of a great nobleman, therefore without a family, and I have a heart. But understand this, engrave it on your brain, which is still so soft; man has a horror of solitude. And of all solitudes, moral solitude is the most appalling. The early anchorites lived with God, they inhabited the most thickly populated of worlds—the spiritual world. Misers dwell in the world of imagination and enjoyment. The miser has everything, even to his sex, in his brain. Man's first thought, though he be leper or galley-slave, knave or invalid, is to have a companion in his destiny. To satisfy that desire, which is life itself, he exerts all his strength, all his power, all the energy of his life. Except for that imperious desire, would Satan have been able to find companions?—A whole poem might be written thereon, a prologue to *Paradise Lost*, which is simply an apology for his rebellion."

"It would be the *Iliad* of corruption," said Lucien.

"Well, I am alone, I live alone! Although I wear the costume, I have not the heart of the priest. I love to devote myself to somebody, I have that vice. I live by devotion, that is why I am a priest. I do not fear ingratitude, and I am grateful. The Church is nothing to me, it is a mere idea. I have devoted myself to the King of Spain; but one cannot love the King of Spain; he patronizes me, he lives on a higher plane than I. I prefer to love my own creature, to fashion him, to mould him to suit myself, so that I may love him as

a father loves his child. I will ride in your tilbury, my boy, I will rejoice in your success with women, I will say: 'This handsome young fellow is myself! I created this Marquis de Rubempré and placed him in aristocratic society; his grandeur is my work, he speaks with my voice, or is silent at my bidding, he consults me in everything.' The Abbé de Vermont stood in that position to Marie-Antoinette."

"He brought her to the scaffold!"

"He didn't love the queen!" rejoined the priest, "he loved no one but Abbé de Vermont."

"Am I to leave desolation behind me?" said Lucien.

"I have wealth, you shall draw upon it as you please."

"At this moment I would do many things to set Séchard free," rejoined Lucien in a tone that betokened no thought of suicide.

"Say the word, my son, and he shall receive tomorrow morning the sum necessary to secure his freedom."

"What! you will give me twelve thousand francs?"

"You see, my child, that we are making four leagues an hour. We shall dine at Poitiers. There, if you choose to sign the compact, to give me a single proof of obedience—it is of great importance to me and I must have it!—why, the Bordeaux diligence shall carry your sister fifteen thousand francs."

"Where are they?"

The Spanish priest made no reply, and Lucien said to himself:

"I have caught him, he was making sport of me."

A moment later they silently entered thé carriage. Without a word the priest put his hand in the pocket of the carriage and took from it a leather bag, made like a game bag, with three compartments so well known to travellers. He took out a hundred *portugaises*, plunging his great hand into the bag three times and withdrawing it full of gold pieces each time.

"I am yours, father," said Lucien, dazzled by this flood of gold.

"Child!" said the priest, kissing him tenderly on the brow, "that is only a third part of the gold that is in this bag, thirty thousand francs, without counting money for travelling expenses."

"And you travel alone?" cried Lucien.

"What of that?" said the Spaniard. "I have more than three hundred thousand francs in drafts on Paris. A diplomatist without money is what you were just now: a poet without will."

*

At the moment that Lucien first entered the carriage with the pretended Spanish diplomat, Ève rose to feed her son, found the fatal letter and read it. A cold shiver froze the moisture left by the morning sleep, a mist veiled her eyes and she called Marion and Kolb.

To the question: "Has my brother gone out?" Kolb replied:

"*Yes, matame, before taybreak.*"

"Keep the most absolute secrecy as to what I tell you," said Ève, "my brother undoubtedly went away with the purpose of taking his life. Run, both of you, make inquiries without arousing suspicion, and watch the river."

Ève was left alone in a dazed condition horrible to see. In the midst of her suffering, about seven o'clock in the morning, Petit-Claud made his appearance to talk business with her. At such moments one listens to anybody.

"Madame," said the solicitor, "our poor, dear David is in prison and affairs have reached the point that I foresaw at the beginning. I advised him then to form a partnership to work his invention

with his rivals, the Cointets, who have in their hands the means of putting in practice what, so far as your husband is concerned, has only reached the stage of conception. And so, last evening, as soon as the news of his arrest reached me, what did I do? I went to Messieurs Cointet with the purpose of obtaining from them concessions which might satisfy you. If you determine to defend the invention, your life will remain what it is to-day: a life of petty scheming in which you will go to the wall, in which, when you are exhausted and ready to die, you will end by making a bargain, to your detriment perhaps, with some man of means, as I want you to do, to your advantage, with Messieurs Cointet Frères to-day. In that way, you will put an end to your privations and to the miseries of the inventor's struggle against the cupidity of the capitalist and the indifference of society. Consider! if Messieurs Cointet pay your debts—if, when your debts are paid, they give you a sum which is to be yours absolutely, whatever the merit, the possibilities or the future of the invention,—allowing you, of course, a certain share in the profits,—will you not be fortunate? You, madame, become owner of the stock and machinery of the printing-office, you will sell it, of course, and that will bring you at least twenty thousand francs; I can promise you a purchaser at that price. If you obtain fifteen thousand francs cash by taking the Messieurs Cointet into partnership, you will have a fortune of thirty-five thousand francs, and at the present price of

Funds that would yield you two thousand francs a year. One can live on two thousand francs in the provinces. And remember, madame, that you would have also the possibilities of your partnership with Messieurs Cointet. I say possibilities, for we must allow for failure. Now, this is what I am in a fair way to obtain for you: in the first place, the payment of David's debts in full; in the second place, fifteen thousand francs to be considered as an allowance to David for his investigations, to be given him outright and not to be subject to any claim on the part of Messieurs Cointet for its return, on any pretext whatever, even if the invention should prove to be valueless; lastly, a partnership between David and Messieurs Cointet to manufacture under a patent to be obtained after his process of paper-making has been tested by experiments made together and secretly; the terms of the partnership to be as follows: Messieurs Cointet to pay all expenses, David's contribution to be the patent, and he to have one fourth of the profits. You are a woman of sound judgment and common sense, which is not often true of very beautiful women; reflect on these propositions and you will find them most acceptable."

"Ah! monsieur," cried poor Ève in despair and bursting into tears, "why did you not come last evening to propose this arrangement to me? We should have avoided dishonor, and—something much worse."

"My discussion with the Cointets, who, as you must have suspected, are hiding behind Métivier, did

not end until midnight. But what has happened since last evening that is worse than our dear David's arrest?" queried Petit-Claud.

"This is the horrible message I found when I woke this morning," she replied, handing him Lucien's letter. "You have proved at this moment that you are truly interested in us, that you are David's friend and Lucien's, and I do not need to ask you to say nothing."

"Don't you be at all alarmed," said Petit-Claud, as he returned the letter after reading it, "Lucien won't kill himself. After causing his brother-in-law's arrest, he had to give some reason for leaving you, and that sounds to me like a tirade to accompany his exit, after the manner of the stage."

The Cointets had gained their ends. Having tortured the inventor and his family, they seized upon the moment when the exhaustion caused by the torture made them long for a little rest. All seekers after secrets do not resemble the bull-dog, who dies with his victim between his teeth, and the Cointets had cunningly studied the characters of their victims. To Cointet the Great, David's arrest was the last scene in the first act of this drama. The second act began with the proposition Petit-Claud had just made. Like a past master in intrigue, the solicitor saw in Lucien's freak one of those unhoped-for chances which decide the result of a game. He found Ève so thoroughly prostrated by that event, that he determined to seize the op-

portunity to win her confidence, for he had finally discovered the wife's influence over the husband.

Therefore, instead of plunging Madame Séchard deeper in despair, he tried to console her, and he very shrewdly led her thoughts toward the prison, thinking that, in her present frame of mind, she might induce David to take the Cointets into partnership.

"David has told me, madame, that he longed for wealth only on your account and your brother's; but you must be satisfied that it would be sheer madness to try and make Lucien rich. That boy would run through three fortunes."

Ève's attitude was sufficient evidence that the last of her illusions concerning her brother had taken flight; the advocate paused therefore as if to convert his client's silence into a sort of assent.

"Thus," he continued, "only yourself and your child are concerned in this question. It is for you to decide whether two thousand francs a year will suffice for your well-being, saying nothing of old Séchard's inheritance. Your father-in-law has had an income of seven or eight thousand francs for many years, without counting the interest on his invested capital; and so you have, after all, brilliant prospects for the future. Why torment yourself further?"

The solicitor left Madame Séchard to reflect upon this prospect, shrewdly prepared the night before by Cointet the Great.

"Go and give them a glimpse of the possibility of

receiving some sum in cash," the lynx of Angoulême had said to the solicitor, when he came to tell him of David's arrest; "and, when they have accustomed themselves to the idea of having money in their hands, they will be ours; we will haggle with them, and, little by little we will bring them down to the price we are willing to give for this secret."

That speech contained the argument of the second act of this financial drama.

When Madame Séchard, her heart torn by apprehension concerning her brother's fate, had dressed herself and gone downstairs on her way to the prison, she found that the idea of walking alone through the streets of Angoulême was horrible to her. At that moment Petit-Claud returned and offered her his arm, impelled by no thought for his client's anguish of mind, but by a Machiavellian idea that had occurred to him; he received credit, however, for a delicacy of feeling of which Ève was extremely sensible, for he allowed her to thank him without correcting her error. This little attention on the part of a man so hard and stern, and at such a moment too, modified Madame Séchard's previously formed opinion of Petit-Claud.

"I am taking you the longest way," he said to her, "but we shall meet nobody."

"This is the first time, monsieur, that I have not been able to walk with my head erect! I learned a hard lesson yesterday."

"This will be the first and the last."

"Oh! I certainly shall not remain in this city—"

"If your husband agrees to the terms which the Cointets and myself have almost agreed upon," said Petit-Claud, when they reached the entrance to the prison, "send word to me, and I will come at once with a paper from Cachan that will allow David to be released; and in all probability he will not return to prison."

These words, spoken in front of the jail, were what the Italians call a *combination*. Among them, that word expresses the indefinable act in which a little perfidy is mingled with straightforwardness, the opportuneness of legal fraud, a piece of rascality, quasi-legal and well-covered; in their view the Saint-Bartholomew was a political combination.

For the reasons heretofore set forth, detention for debt is so rare a thing in the provinces, that in most French towns there is no debtors' prison. In such cases the debtor is confined in the prison where those suspected, charged, indicted and convicted of crime are confined. Such are the successive appellations which the law bestows upon those whom the people call by the generic name of criminals. Thus David was placed temporarily in one of the lower cells of the prison of Angoulême, which, perhaps, had just been vacated by some convict who had served his time. When his name had been duly registered, together with the sum allowed for the food of prisoners for a month, David found himself face to face with a large man who, so far as prisoners are concerned, wields a power more absolute than the king's own: the jailer! In the provinces,

thin jailers are unknown. In the first place, the post is almost a sinecure; and, then a jailer is like an innkeeper who has no rent to pay, he feeds himself very well by feeding his prisoners ill, and lodges them, as the innkeeper does, according to their means. He knew David by name, especially because of his father, and he had sufficient confidence to provide him with good accommodations for one night although David had not a sou.

The prison of Angoulême dates from the Middle Ages, and has undergone no more changes than the cathedral. It is still called a house of justice and adjoins the former *présidial*. The wicket is classic in style, with a low, heavily studded door, solid in appearance but much worn, and of Cyclopean construction, having a single eye in the shape of the small window through which the jailer takes a look at people before opening the door. A corridor runs along the front on the ground floor, and upon this corridor are several cells, whose high windows, embellished with hoods, receive light from the yard. The jailer's apartment is separated from these cells by an arch that divides the ground floor in two parts, and at the end of the arch, one can see from the wicket the grating that leads to the yard. David was escorted by the jailer to that cell which was nearest the archway, and the door of which was opposite his own quarters. The jailer wished to be neighborly with a man whom, considering his private station, he could afford to admit to his companionship.

"This is the best cell," he said, seeing that David stood aghast at the sight of the place.

The walls of the cell were of stone and decidedly damp. The windows, which were very near the ceiling, were provided with iron bars. The stone flags made one shiver with cold. The measured step of the guard on duty could be heard in the corridor. That sound, monotonous as the plashing of the waves, forces one at every moment to think: "I am watched! I am not free!" All these details, the sum total of small things, produces a tremendous impression on the mind of an honest man. David noticed an execrable bed; but incarcerated persons are so intensely agitated the first night that they do not notice how hard their beds are until the second night. The jailer was very obliging, he suggested to his prisoner that he walk in the yard until dark. David's torture did not begin until he retired. Prisoners were allowed no lights, and it was necessary to procure a permit from the king's attorney to exempt the prisoner for debt from the rule which was evidently intended to apply only to those persons who were under sentence. The jailer invited David to his own quarters, but it was necessary to lock him up at bedtime. Thereupon Ève's poor husband realized the horrors of prison life and the revolting indecency of its customs. But, by one of the mental reactions familiar to thinkers, he isolated himself in that solitude, he escaped from it in one of those dreams which poets have power to summon when they are wide awake. The poor

fellow ended by turning his thoughts to his own affairs. Imprisonment leads a man to search his conscience. David asked himself if he had fulfilled his duties as the head of a family. How great must be his wife's desolation! Why did he not, as Marion advised, earn enough money to be able to proceed with his invention at his leisure?

"How can I remain at Angoulême after such a scandal?" he said to himself. "If I am released from prison, what will become of us? where shall we go?"

Some doubts assailed him as to his past conduct. It was one of those distressful hours which none but inventors can understand. Going from doubt to doubt, David at last acquired a clear perception of his situation, and he said to himself what the Cointets had said to Père Séchard, what Petit-Claud said to Ève:

"Assuming that all goes well, what will happen when I apply for a patent? I must have a patent, and that means money! I must have a factory in which to make my experiments on a large scale, and that means divulging my secret! Oh! how right Petit-Claud was!"

The darkest prison cells give forth the most vivid flashes of light.

"Bah!" said David, as he fell asleep on a sort of camp bed on which was a vile mattress covered with very coarse brown cloth, "undoubtedly I shall see Petit-Claud to-morrow morning."

Thus David was well prepared to listen to

the propositions his wife brought him from his enemies. After she had embraced her husband and seated herself at the foot of the bed,—for there was only one chair, a wooden one of the most wretched kind—the wife's glance fell upon the filthy basin in the corner and the walls covered with names and apothegms written by David's predecessors. Thereupon the tears began to flow again from her red-rimmed eyes. She still had tears after all she had shed, when she saw her husband in the position of a criminal.

"And this is where the desire for glory may lead!" she cried. "Oh! my angel, abandon this career. Let us walk together along the beaten track and not seek to make our fortune rapidly. I need but little to be happy, especially after suffering so much! And if you only knew!—this dishonoring arrest is not the greatest of our misfortunes! look!"

She handed him Lucien's letter, which David soon read; and to comfort him, she told him of Petit-Claud's horrible suggestion concerning Lucien.

"If he has killed himself, it's all over now," said David; "and if it isn't done now, he won't do it at all; he can't, as he says, hold his courage for more than one morning."

"But must we remain in this state of anxiety?" cried the sister, who forgave almost everything at the idea of death.

She repeated to her husband the propositions Petit-Claud claimed to have obtained from the Coin-

tets, and they were at once accepted by David with evident delight.

"We shall have enough to live on in some village near L'Houmeau, wherever the Cointets may locate their factory, and I want nothing now but tranquillity!" cried the inventor. "If Lucien has punished himself by death, we shall have enough to wait until my father dies; and, if he is still living, the poor boy must make up his mind to fall in with our modest mode of life. The Cointets will certainly make money out of my invention; but, after all, what am I, compared to my province? One man. If my invention benefits everybody, why, I am content! You see, my dear Ève, neither of us was made for business. We have neither the thirst for gain nor the reluctance to relax our hold on anything in the shape of money, no matter how justly due, which are perhaps the virtues of the business man; for those two sorts of avarice are called commercial wisdom and genius!"

Overjoyed by this conformity of opinions,—one of the sweetest flowers of love, for selfishness and intelligence can not agree in two persons who love each other—Ève requested the jailer to send a note to Petit-Claud in which she bade him procure David's release, informing him of their united assent to the terms of the proposed arrangement. Ten minutes later, Petit-Claud entered David's repulsive cell and said to Ève:

"Return home, madame, we will follow you.—Well, my dear friend," he said to David, "so you

allowed yourself to be taken! How came you to commit the mistake of coming out?"

"What! how could I help coming out? here's what Lucien wrote me."

David handed Cérizet's letter to Petit-Claud; the solicitor took it, read it, examined it, felt the paper, and as he talked, folded it as if absent-mindedly and put it in his pocket. Then he took David's arm and went out with him, for the bailiff's discharge was brought to the jailer while they were talking.

When David returned home he fancied he was in heaven, he wept like a child as he kissed his little Lucien and found himself once more in his own bedroom after three weeks' confinement, the last hours of which were, according to provincial ideas, degrading. Kolb and Marion had returned. Marion learned at L'Houmeau that Lucien had been seen walking on the Paris road, beyond Marsac. The dandy's costume was remarked by the country people who brought provisions to the town. Thereupon Kolb had started off on horseback and had finally learned at Mansle that Lucien had been seen and recognized by Monsieur Marron, travelling by post in a calèche.

"What did I tell you?" cried Petit-Claud. "That boy's not a poet, he's a serial novel."

"By post!" exclaimed Ève, "where is he going this time?"

"Now," said Petit-Claud to David, "come to Messieurs Cointets', they are waiting for you."

"Oh! monsieur," cried the lovely Madame Sé-

chard, "stand out for our interests, I beseech you; you have our whole future in your hands."

"Would you prefer, madame, that the conference should be held here?" asked Petit-Claud. "I leave David with you. Those gentlemen will come here this evening and you will see if I am able to defend your interests."

"Ah! monsieur, you would oblige me beyond words," said Ève.

"Very good," said Petit-Claud, "until this evening at seven o'clock."

"I thank you," rejoined Ève with a glance and an accent that showed Petit-Claud how much progress he had made in his fair client's confidence.

"Have no fear! you see that I was right," he added. "Your brother is thirty leagues from suicide. It may be that you will have a little fortune this evening. A genuine customer for your printing-office has made his appearance."

"If that is so," said Ève, "why not wait before binding ourselves to the Cointets?"

"You forget, madame," Petit-Claud replied, realizing the danger of the disclosure, "that you won't be free to sell your printing-office until you have paid Monsieur Métivier, for all your tools are still under seizure."

When he returned to his office, Petit-Claud sent for Cérizet. When the proof-reader entered the room, he led him into the window recess.

"To-morrow you will be proprietor of the Séchard printing-office, and with sufficiently powerful patron-

age to obtain the transfer of the license," he said in his ear; "but you don't want to end your career at the galleys, eh?"

"What! what! the galleys?" exclaimed Cérizet.

"Your letter to David is a forgery and I have it in my pocket. If Henriette should be questioned, what would she say? I have no desire to ruin you," said Petit-Claud hastily, seeing that Cérizet turned pale.

"You want something more of me?" cried the Parisian.

"Well, this is what I expect of you," rejoined Petit-Claud. "Listen carefully! You will be a master printer at Angoulême within two months, but you will owe for your establishment, and you won't have paid for it in ten years' time! You will work a long while for your capitalists! and furthermore, you will be compelled to be the scapegoat of the liberal party. I shall draw up your partnership articles with Gannerac; I will draw them so that you will have the printing-office for your own some day. But if they start a newspaper, if you are the manager of it and I am first deputy here, you will make an arrangement with Cointet the Great to insert in your paper articles of a nature to cause it to be seized and suppressed. The Cointets will pay you handsomely for doing them that service. I know that you will be convicted and imprisoned, but you will be looked upon as a man of importance and a victim of persecution. You will become a personage in the liberal party, a Sergeant Mercier, a Paul-

Louis Courier, a Manuel on a small scale. I will not allow your license to be taken from you. Finally, on the day the newspaper is suppressed, I will burn this letter before your eyes. Your fortune won't cost you dear."

The common people have very erroneous ideas as to the legal distinctions between different kinds of forgery, and Cérizet, who imagined himself already in the dock at the assizes, breathed once more.

"Three years hence I shall be king's attorney at Angoulême," continued Petit-Claud; "consider that you may need my assistance!"

"It's a bargain," said Cérizet. "But you don't know me: burn that letter before me now and trust to my gratitude."

Petit-Claud looked at him. It was one of those duels of the eye, in which the glance of him who scrutinizes is like a scalpel with which he seeks to probe the mind, while the eyes of him who places his virtues on exhibition are like a play.

Petit-Claud made no reply; he lighted a candle and burned the letter, saying to himself:

"He has his fortune to make!"

"You have a man at your service for anything," said Cérizet.

David awaited the conference with the Cointets with vague uneasiness: he was not thinking of the discussion of his own interests, or of the agreement to be executed, but of their probable opinion of his work. He found himself in the situation of the dramatic author before his judges. The character-

istic inventor's self-esteem and his anxiety as the moment of attaining his end approached, overshadowed every other feeling. At last, at seven o'clock in the evening, at the very moment that the Comtesse du Châtelet was going to bed on the pretext of a sick headache, leaving her husband to do the honors of the dinner table, so distressed was she by the contradictory reports in circulation concerning Lucien; the Cointets, the Fat and the Great, made their appearance with Petit-Claud at the house of their rival, who was about to place himself, bound hand and foot, in their power. At the outset they were met by a preliminary obstacle: how could they sign articles of partnership without some knowledge of David's processes? And, when David's processes were disclosed, David was at the mercy of the Cointets. Petit-Claud persuaded them to have the articles drawn first. Cointet the Great thereupon asked David to show him some of his results, and the inventor handed him the last sheets he had made, guaranteeing the net cost.

"Very good," said Petit-Claud, "there's the foundation for a partnership agreement ready to your hand; you can base your agreement upon these specimens, with a clause providing for dissolution in case the conditions of the patent aren't fulfilled in the manufacture."

"It's quite another thing, monsieur," said Cointet the Great to David, "it's one thing to manufacture specimens of paper in a small way, in

one's room with a small form, and another to manufacture on a large scale. You can judge by a single fact! We make colored papers and we buy, to color them, parcels of coloring matter supposed to be identical. For instance, the indigo that we use to color our blue demy is taken from a box in which all the cakes were manufactured at the same time. And yet, we have never been able to obtain two vats of exactly the same shade. In the preparation of our materials some phenomena occur that escape our notice. The quantity, the quality of the pulp defeat instantly every sort of reasoning. When you had in a small pan a portion of the ingredients which I do not ask to know, you had it under your control, you could work upon all parts uniformly, unite them, *pound* them, mould them at your will, so that the resulting mass would be absolutely homogeneous. But who can guarantee that it will be the same with a vat of five hundred reams, and that your process will be successful?"

David, Ève and Petit-Claud looked at one another, saying many things with their eyes.

"Take an example which is somewhat analogous," continued Cointet, after a pause. "You cut two bundles of hay in your field and put them, bound very tight, in your hayloft, without giving the grass a chance to heat, as the peasants say; the fermentation takes place but nothing happens. You rely upon that experiment and heap up two thousand bundles in a wooden barn—you know that the hay would take fire and your barn would burn

like a match. You are a sensible man," he said to David, "draw your own conclusions. You have thus far cut two bundles of hay, and we are afraid of setting fire to our paper mill by storing two thousand there. In other words, we may lose more than one vatful and find ourselves with nothing in hand after spending a lot of money."

David was dumfounded. Practice was talking its positive language to theory, whose words always relate to the future.

"Deuce take me if I sign such an agreement!" cried Cointet the Fat roughly. "You can throw your money away if you choose, Boniface,—I'll keep mine. I offer to pay Monsieur Séchard's debts and six thousand francs.—Three thousand francs in notes," he said, correcting himself, "at twelve and fifteen months. That will be risk enough to run. We have twelve thousand francs to charge ourselves with on Métivier's account. That will make fifteen thousand francs! Why, that's all I'd pay for the secret to work it for my own benefit alone. Ah! so this is the great find you talked about, is it, Boniface?—No, thanks, I thought you had more sense. No, this isn't what I call a fair business chance."

"The question for you," said Petit-Claud, undismayed by this outburst, "reduces itself to this: Do you choose to risk twenty thousand francs for a secret that may make you rich? Why, messieurs, the risk is always in proportion to the profits. It's a stake of twenty thousand francs against a fortune.

The gambler stakes one louis to win thirty-six at roulette, but he knows that his louis is lost. Do the same."

"I require time to reflect," said Cointet the Fat; "I'm not so sharp as my brother. I'm a poor plain-spoken fellow, who knows how to do but one thing: make the *Paroissien* for twenty sous and sell it for forty. I look upon an invention which is only in the first experimental stage as a cause of ruin. You'll succeed with your first vatful, fail with the second, keep on and get in deeper and deeper, and when you've caught your arm in that sort of gear, the body follows."

He told the story of a Bordeaux tradesman who ruined himself trying to cultivate moors on the advice of a scientific man; he mentioned six similar examples in the neighborhood, in the departments of the Charente and the Dordogne, in manufacturing and agriculture; he lost his temper, refused to listen to anything more, and Petit-Claud's arguments increased his irritation instead of allaying it.

"I prefer to pay more for something of more certain value than this invention, and take a smaller profit," he continued, glancing at his brother. "In my opinion, nothing has gone far enough to talk about."

"But you came here for something, didn't you?" said Petit-Claud. "What do you offer?"

"To release Monsieur Séchard and allow him thirty per cent of the profits in case of success," replied Cointet the Fat, hastily.

"Why, monsieur," said Ève, "what are we to live on while the experiments are going on? My husband has had the shame of arrest, he might as well return to prison, he will be there to all intents and purposes, and we will pay our debts."

Petit-Claud glanced at Ève and put his finger to his lips.

"You are not reasonable," he said to the brothers. "You have seen the paper; Père Séchard told you that his son, locked in his cellar by him, had made excellent paper in a single night with ingredients of trifling cost. You are here to arrange for purchasing the invention. Will you purchase, yes or no?"

"Hark ye," said Cointet the Great, "whether my brother is willing or not, I myself will risk paying Monsieur Séchard's debts; I will give him six thousand francs in cash, and Monsieur Séchard shall have thirty per cent of the profits; but understand this: if, at the end of a year, he has not fulfilled the conditions that he himself inserts in the agreement, he must repay the six thousand francs, the patent will belong to us and we will get out of it as best we can."

"Are you sure of yourself?" asked Petit-Claud, taking David aside.

"Yes," said David, who was completely deceived by the tactics of the two brothers, and trembled lest Cointet the Fat should break off the conference, on which his whole future depended.

"Very good, I will go and draw the agreement," said Petit-Claud to the Cointets and Ève; "you

shall each have a copy to-night and you can think over it all the morning; then, to-morrow afternoon, at four o'clock, when court has adjourned, you can execute it. Do you, messieurs, withdraw Métivier's notes. I will write to have the appeal go no farther in the Royal Court, and we will mutually see that all proceedings are dismissed."

Séchard's obligations under the partnership agreement were thus stated:

"BETWEEN THE UNDERSIGNED, etc.

"Monsieur David Séchard, printer, of Angoulême, declaring that he has invented a method of sizing paper uniformly in the vat, and a method of reducing the cost of manufacture of every species of paper more than fifty per cent by the introduction of vegetable matters in the pulp, whether by mingling them with the rags used at present, or by making use of them without the addition of rags, a partnership for working the patent to be obtained for the above processes is hereby formed between Monsieur David Sechard and Messieurs Cointet Frères, on the terms and conditions following—"

One of the articles deprived David Séchard absolutely of all rights in case he should not perform his agreements as set forth in this document, which was carefully drawn by Cointet the Great and assented to by David.

When he brought the agreement at half-past seven the next morning, Petit-Claud informed, David and his wife that Cérizet offered twenty-two thousand francs in cash for the printing-office. The bill of sale could be signed that evening.

"But," said he, "if the Cointets should get wind of this transaction, they would be quite capable of refusing to sign your agreement, of annoying you, and of having the property sold."

"Are you sure of the payment?" asked Ève, astonished at this happy termination of an affair of which she had despaired, and which, three months earlier, would have saved everything.

"I have the money at my office," he replied concisely.

"Why, it's like magic," said David, as he asked Petit-Claud to explain their good fortune.

"No, it's a very simple matter, the tradesmen of L'Houmeau propose to start a newspaper."

"But I bound myself not to do it," cried David.

"Yourself! but not your successor. At all events, don't disturb yourself, but sell, pocket the money and leave Cérizet to disentangle the clauses of the contract; he'll find a way out of it."

"Oh! yes," said Ève.

"If you bound yourself not to publish a paper in Angoulême, the contributors will publish it at L'Houmeau," continued Petit-Claud.

Ève, dazzled by the prospect of possessing thirty thousand francs, of being beyond want, looked upon the partnership agreement as only a secondary source of hope. And so she and David yielded on one point in the document which furnished food for a final discussion. Cointet the Great demanded the privilege of taking out the patent in his name. He succeeded in demonstrating that, when David's

beneficial rights were clearly defined in the articles, it made no difference in which partner's name the patent stood. Finally his brother said:

"He furnishes the money for the patent and pays the travelling expenses, and that's two thousand francs more! let him take it in his name or nothing is done."

Thus the lynx triumphed at every point. The articles were signed about half-past four. Cointet the Great gallantly presented Madame Séchard with a dozen forks and spoons and a fine Ternaux shawl, by way of gratuity, to make her forget the heated discussions! he said. Hardly were the duplicates exchanged, hardly had Cachan finished handing Petit-Claud all the documents and discharges as well as the three disastrous notes forged by Lucien, when Kolb's voice rang out on the stairway, succeeding the deafening noise made by a van from the Messagerie's office which stopped in front of the door.

"*Matame! matame! vifteen tausend vrancs!*" he cried, "*zent vrom Boidiers* (Poitiers) *en hard gash py Monzire Lucien.*"

"Fifteen thousand francs!" cried Ève, raising her arms.

"Yes, madame," said the messenger, appearing at the door, "fifteen thousand francs brought by the diligence from Bordeaux, and a good load it was, my word! I have two men below to bring up the bags. It was sent to you by Monsieur Lucien Chardon de Rubempré. I've brought up a little leather bag in

which there's five hundred francs in gold for you, and probably a letter."

Ève believed that she was dreaming as she read the following lines:

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"Here are fifteen thousand francs.

"Instead of killing myself I have sold my life: I no longer belong to myself. I am something more than secretary to a Spanish diplomatist, I am his creature.

"Once more I begin a horrible existence. Perhaps I should have done better to drown myself.

"Adieu. David will be free, and with four thousand francs he can undoubtedly purchase a small paper mill and make a fortune.

"Think no more, I beg you, of

"Your poor brother,

"LUCIEN."

"It is written," said Madame Chardon, as she came in and saw them piling up the bags, "that my poor son will always do harm, as he himself wrote, even when he means to do good."

"We had a narrow escape!" cried Cointet the Great when he was on Place du Mûrier. "An hour later, the reflection of that money would have lighted up the agreement, and our man would have taken fright. In three months, as he promised us, we shall know what to expect."

That evening, at seven o'clock, Cérizet purchased the printing-office and paid for it, agreeing to pay the rent for the last quarter. The next day, Ève handed forty thousand francs to the receiver general, to purchase Funds in her husband's name, yielding twenty-five hundred francs a year. Then she wrote to her father-in-law to look about for a small estate at Marsac, worth about ten thousand francs, in which to invest her personal fortune.

Cointet the Great's plan was of startling simplicity. In the first place, he believed sizing in the vat to be impossible. The addition of inexpensive vegetable matters to the pulp made of rags seemed to him the true, the only method of making a fortune out of the idea. He proposed therefore to treat the cheapness of the pulp as of no importance and to lay tremendous stress on the matter of sizing in the vat. This is why. The manufactories of Angoulême were then engaged almost exclusively in the production of writing papers—crown, students', demy and note-paper—which are necessarily sized. For a long while such papers were the glory of the

Angoulême paper trade. Thus the fact that the Angoulême manufacturers had for long years monopolized this specialty, made the insistence of the Cointets seem reasonable; although sized paper, as we shall see, did not enter into their calculations. The demand for writing paper is exceedingly limited, while that for unsized printing paper is practically without limit. During his trip to Paris to take out the patent in his own name, Cointet the Great deemed it wise to make certain business arrangements which required great changes in his manufacturing methods. Taking up his quarters with Métivier, he instructed him to secure the custom of the newspapers, within a year, by putting the price per ream so low that no factory could compete with it, and by promising each paper superiority in whiteness and other desirable qualities over the finest varieties of papers theretofore in use. As the contracts of the papers were made for a stated time, it would require a considerable amount of underhand work with the various managements to secure this monopoly; but Cointet calculated that he would have time to get rid of Séchard while Métivier was obtaining contracts with the principal newspapers of Paris, whose consumption at this time amounted to two hundred reams a day. Naturally Cointet gave Métivier a certain definite interest in the contracts, in order to have an able representative on the ground in Paris and not have to waste his own time in travelling. Métivier's fortune, one of the most considerable in the paper

trade, originated with this arrangement. For ten years he had the custom of the Parisian newspapers, without possibility of rivalry.

With his mind at ease as to a market for his future product, Cointet the Great returned to Angoulême in time to be present at the wedding of Petit-Claud, who had sold his office and was simply awaiting the appointment of his successor before taking Monsieur Milaud's place, which was promised to the Comtesse du Châtelet's protégé. The second deputy king's attorney at Angoulême was appointed first deputy at Limoges, and the keeper of the seals sent one of his protégés to the office in Angoulême, where the post of first deputy was left vacant for two months. That interval was Petit-Claud's honeymoon. In Cointet the Great's absence, David first made one vatful of pulp without sizing, which produced a paper for newspaper use far superior to that which the newspapers were then using; then he made a second vatful of magnificent vellum, intended for the finest work, on which the Cointets printed an edition of the *Paroissien* of the diocese. The materials were prepared by David himself in secret, for he would have no other assistants than Kolb and Marion.

On Cointet the Great's return, affairs took on a new face; he examined the specimens of paper and was moderately satisfied.

"My dear friend," he said to David, "the staple of the Angoulême paper trade is the *demy*. What we must do, first of all, is to make the finest pos-

sible demy, at fifty per cent less than the present net price."

David tried to make a vatful of sized pulp for demy, and produced a paper as rough as a brush with the sizing scattered over it in lumps. When the experiment was finished and David had one of the sheets in his hand, he went into a corner to devour his vexation alone; but Cointet was delightfully amiable, he consoled his partner and urged him to try again.

"Don't be discouraged," he said, "keep right on! I'm a good fellow and I understand you; I'll see you through!"

"Really," said David to his wife when he went home to dinner, "we are dealing with good men; I had no idea Cointet was so generous!"

And he repeated his conversation with his perfidious associate.

Three months were consumed in experiments. David slept at the paper mill and watched the results of the various methods of mixing his pulp. Sometimes he attributed his ill-success to the combination of rags with his materials, and then he would try a vatful of the latter alone. Sometimes he tried to size a vatful of pulp consisting entirely of rags. And, following up his work with admirable energy under the eyes of Cointet the Great, whom the poor fellow no longer distrusted, he went on from one thing to another until he had exhausted the list of possible combinations of his ingredients with all the different kinds of sizing. During the first six

months of the year 1823, David lived at the paper mill with Kolb, if it can be called living to neglect one's sustenance and clothing and person. He struggled so desperately against the obstacles that beset him, that to any other men than the Cointets, it would have been a sublime spectacle, for the sturdy fighter was influenced by no thought of his own interest. There was a time when he cared for nothing but to triumph. He scrutinized with wonderful sagacity, the curious effects of substances transformed by man at his convenience into manufactured products, in which nature is in some sort vanquished in its secret resistance ; and he deduced therefrom certain useful laws of manufacturing, observing that that sort of product could be obtained only by paying careful heed to the ultimate relations of things, to what he called the second nature of substances. At last, in the month of August, he succeeded in obtaining a paper, sized in the vat, exactly similar to what the factories were making at that moment ; a paper used for proof sheets in printing-offices, which is not uniform in quality and the sizing of which is not always certain. This result, so valuable in 1823, considering the state of the paper trade, had cost ten thousand francs, and David hoped to solve the last difficulties of the problem.

But about that time strange rumors began to circulate through L'Houmeau and Angoulême : David Séchard was ruining Cointet Frères. After spending thirty thousand francs in experiments, he had

finally obtained, it was said, some wretched paper. The other manufacturers were frightened off and clung to their old processes; and, being jealous of the Cointets, they spread the report of the approaching downfall of that ambitious house. For his part, Cointet the Great sent for machinery to make continuous paper, giving out that it was necessitated by David Séchard's experiments. But the hypocrite mingled with his pulp the ingredients used by Séchard, urging him all the while to devote his attention to sizing in the vat, and he sent Métivier thousands of reams of paper for the newspapers. One day in the month of September, Cointet the Great took David aside and, learning from him that he was preparing for a triumphant experiment, he tried to persuade him to abandon the struggle.

"My dear David, go to Marsac to see your wife, and rest from your labors, we don't want to ruin ourselves," he said in a friendly way. "What you consider a great triumph is only a point of departure. We shall wait now before attempting any fresh experiments. Be reasonable! Look at the results. We are not paper-makers simply, we are printers and bankers, and people say you are ruining us."

David made a gesture sublime in its artlessness, to protest his good faith.

"Fifty thousand francs tossed into the Charente won't ruin us," said Cointet in response to the gesture; "but we don't want to be compelled to pay cash for everything on account of the slanderous reports that are going about; we should have to

stop operations. We have reached the end of the time limit in our agreement, and we must both consider what's to be done."

"He is right!" said David to himself for, being absorbed in his own experiments on a large scale, he had paid no heed to what was going on in the factory.

He went to Marsac, where he had been in the habit of going to see Ève on Saturday nights for the past six months, returning to Angoulême on Tuesday morning. Well-advised by Père Séchard, Ève had purchased an estate called La Verberie, immediately adjoining her father-in-law's vineyards, with three acres of garden and a small vineyard surrounded by the old man's property. She lived there with her mother and Marion, very economically, for she still owed five thousand francs on the price of that delightful little estate, the prettiest in all Marsac. The house, with courtyard in front and garden behind, was built of white tufa, with a slated roof, and covered with carving, which can be done at small expense on tufa, it is so easily cut. The pretty furniture from the house at Angoulême seemed even prettier in the country, where the slightest approach to luxurious living was unknown at that time and in that province. At the back of the house, on the garden side, there were rows of pomegranates, orange trees and rare plants, which the last owner, an old general who died at the hands of Monsieur Marron, raised himself.

As David sat with his wife and his father, playing with little Lucien under an orange tree, the bailiff of

Mansle served with his own hands a summons from Cointet Frères to their partner to appoint the board of arbitrators by whom, according to the terms of their agreement, all questions arising between them were to be decided. The Cointets demanded restitution of the six thousand francs and an assignment of all claim to the patent, as well as to any possible future results of working it, as indemnity for the large sums expended by them without result.

"They say you are ruining them," said the old vinegrower to his son. "Upon my word, that's the only thing you've ever done that pleased me."

The next morning at nine o'clock, Ève and David were in the reception room of Monsieur Petit-Claud, now defender of the widow and guardian of the orphan, whose advice seemed to them all that they had to depend upon.

The magistrate greeted his former clients with great cordiality, and insisted that Monsieur and Madame Séchard should gratify him by breakfasting with him.

"The Cointets demand six thousand francs!" he said with a smile. "What do you still owe on the price of La Verberie?"

"Five thousand francs, monsieur, but I have two thousand," Ève replied.

"Keep your two thousand francs," said Petit-Claud. "Let us see, five thousand!—you need ten thousand more to settle yourself comfortably there. Very good, in two hours the Cointets will bring you fifteen thousand francs —"

Ève made a gesture of surprise.

"In consideration of your renunciation of all share in the profits of the partnership, which you will agree to dissolve," said the magistrate. "Does that suit you?"

"And the money will be lawfully ours?" said Ève.

"Quite lawfully," the magistrate replied with a smile. "The Cointets have tormented you enough, I propose to put an end to their demands. Listen, I am a magistrate now and I owe you the truth. The Cointets are cheating you at this moment; but you are in their power. You might win the lawsuit they threaten you with, if you accept the challenge. Do you want to have ten years more of litigation? They will multiply reports and submissions to arbitrators, and you will have to run the risk of the most contradictory opinions. And then," he added with a smile, "I don't see that there is any solicitor to defend your interests—my successor is without means. Come, a bad settlement is better than a successful lawsuit."

"Any settlement that will give us peace will suit me," said David.

"Paul!" Petit-Claud shouted to his servant, "run and find Monsieur Ségaud, my successor.—While we are breakfasting, he will go and see the Cointets," he said to his former clients, "and in a few hours you can start for Marsac, ruined, but at peace. Ten thousand francs will give you five hundred a year additional income, and you can live happily on your little property."

Two hours later, as Petit-Claud had promised, Maître Ségaud returned with documents in due form signed by the Cointets, and with fifteen one-thousand-franc notes.

"We owe you a great deal," said Séchard to Petit-Claud.

"Why, I have just ruined you," replied Petit-Claud, to the amazement of his former clients. "I say again, I have ruined you, as you will see in due time; but I know you, you prefer ruin to a fortune which perhaps would come too late."

"We are not greedy, monsieur, we thank you for having given us the means to live happily," said Madame Ève, "and you will always find us grateful."

"Great God! don't bless me!" cried Petit-Claud, "you fill me with remorse; but I think I have made everything all right to-day. I owe it to you that I have become a magistrate; and, if anyone should be grateful, I am the one. Adieu."

In time Kolb changed his opinion of Père Séchard, who, for his part, became quite attached to the Alsatian, finding that, like himself, he had no idea of reading or writing, and was easily made tipsy. The former *bear* taught the former cuirassier to look after the vineyard and sell its product, he trained him with the idea of leaving his children a man who knew something; for in the last days of his life he was tormented by great but puerile anxiety as to the fate of his property. He had taken Courtois the miller into his confidence.

"You'll see how my children will make things fly when I'm underground," he said. "Ah! my God, their future makes me shudder."

In March 1829 old Séchard died, leaving about two hundred thousand francs in real estate, which, when added to La Verberie, made a magnificent estate, which Kolb had managed with great prudence for two years.

David and his wife found nearly a hundred thousand francs in gold in their father's house. Public rumor, as always, exaggerated old Séchard's hoard to such a degree, that it was reckoned at a million throughout the department of the Charente. Ève and David had almost thirty thousand francs a year by adding their own little fortune to old Séchard's inheritance; for they waited some time before investing their money and were in a position to invest it in the Funds immediately after the Revolution of July. Not until then did the department of the Charente and David Séchard have any definite information as to the fortune of Cointet the Great. Possessed of several millions, a member of the Chamber of Deputies, he is to-day a peer of France, and will be Minister of Commerce, it is said, in the approaching coalition. In 1842 he married the daughter of one of the most influential statesmen supporting the present dynasty, Mademoiselle Popinot, daughter of Monsieur Anselme Popinot, Deputy for Paris and Mayor of an arrondissement.

David Séchard's invention has become a part of French paper-making, as the food becomes part of

the body. Thanks to the introduction of other materials than rags, France can make paper more cheaply than any other European country. But Holland paper, as David Séchard foresaw, is no longer made. Sooner or later, doubtless, it will be found necessary to establish a royal manufactory of paper, as the Gobelins, Sèvres, the Savonnerie and the Imprimerie Royale have been established, all of which have thus far survived the blows aimed at them by bourgeois vandals.

David Séchard, beloved by his wife and blest with two sons and a daughter, has had the good taste never to speak of his experiments, and Ève has succeeded in persuading him to abandon the disastrous vocation of an inventor, a Moses consumed by the bush of Horeb. He cultivates letters in his leisure hours, but he leads the happy, indolent life of the landed proprietor who manages his own estates. Having said adieu forever to all thought of renown, he has bravely taken his place in the class of dreamers and collectors; he is deeply interested in entomology and is seeking to discover the transformations of insects which man knows only in their final state—a secret hitherto undiscovered.

Everybody has heard of the success of Petit-Claud as procureur général; he is a rival of the famous Vinet of Provins, and his ambition is to become first president of the Royal Court at Poitiers.

Cérizet, frequently convicted of political offences, has been much in the public eye. The boldest of the black sheep of the liberal party, he was called

the courageous Cérizet. Forced by Petit-Claud's successor to sell his printing establishment at Angoulême, he sought on the provincial stage, a fresh field in which his talents as an actor would enable him to shine. A *jeune première* compelled him to go to Paris to seek at the hands of science remedies against love, and there he tried to coin money out of the favor of the liberal party.

As for Lucien, his return to Paris lies within the domain of the SCENES OF PARISIAN LIFE.

1835-1843.

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